NEA Today
WASHINGTON, D.C. OCTOBER 1993
A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL INSERT:
1994 Guide to NEA Member Benefits

When Bad Things Happen To Good Ideas

The Vermont Portfolio Story See page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Let Us Not Forget . . .

On television I had seen the raging Mississippi. In newspapers I had read about the Missouri River creating an entirely new course for itself and, in the process, rearranging the earth's terrain. By phone I had talked to anguished Association colleagues who had experienced the flood firsthand.

None of this prepared me for what I encountered on the day that Paul Brother, an NEA member from the Rockwood School District in Missouri, drove me to his evacuated home in Lemay.

Paul's house had been flooded, not by water that had cascaded over the levee, but by the putrid filth that had gushed up through the sewer. At its peak the water reached a level two feet over the eaves.

We squished over living room carpeting covered with an inch of slime. The kitchen cupboard doors had been warped into the shape of the letter C. And the plaster and insulation that once protected the bathroom were now strewn over the floor and tub.

That evening, I flew home. The flight attendants told me, "Your clothing doesn't smell too bad as long as we don't get close to you."

To call my experience in Paul Brother's home painful or unforgettable is an understatement. Words are inadequate to the reality.

The same is true of my visit to the Crystal City High School football stadium in Missouri. The entire field was five feet under water—even after a 10-foot drop from its peak. The field will probably not see sunlight this football season, let alone the cleats of high school athletes.

I will always carry with me the images of faces creased with anguish, frustration, and exhaustion that I saw as Association members and parents from Valmeyer, Illinois, described the devastation of their homes, their school, their community, and their dreams. Just as surely, I will always remember the faces of dedication, determination, and pride. No one in Valmeyer is giving up.

As I left this small town that had been entirely submerged under water for weeks, the mobile units that will serve as Valmeyer's school this year were being assembled on the fairgrounds of neighboring Waterloo. The people of Valmeyer may be battered, but they are not beaten.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Many states were pounded by the devastating floods of 1993, but none more relentlessly or more mercilessly than Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. The ravages that the people of these states endured no longer make headlines. But let us not forget that while the floodwaters have receded, pain hasn't. Need hasn't.

Many of you called and wrote to me in the weeks following the flood, asking how you could help. I have inquired in all three states about adopt-a-school and adopt-an-Association programs. Such programs have been established in abundance. And, quite honestly, these initiatives, though welcome, miss the heart of the problem. What the people really need is money—cold hard cash.

They need resources to help teachers and social workers assess the psychological and social needs of students and parents. They need funds to salvage schools that were destroyed or heavily damaged. And they need money to assist members who have lost their homes and their possessions, many of whom had no flood insurance because they were not allowed to buy it. They were told they didn't live in a flood area!

Our affiliates in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri have established flood relief funds for these very purposes. If you wish to make a contribution—or wish to ask your local or state Association to organize a fundraiser, or encourage your students to collect pennies, nickels, or dollars—I urge you to move quickly. You may send your contributions to:

➤ **Illinois Education Association**
Flood Relief Fund
100 E. Edwards Street
Springfield, IL 62704

➤ **Flood Bank 93**
Iowa State Education Association
4025 Tonawanda Drive
Des Moines, IA 50312

➤ **Missouri NEA Flood Relief Fund**
1810 E. Elm Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101-4174

In the past we have supported our colleagues in times of need and times of distress in many other states and locals. I know we will come through once again. That's what our Association is all about. That's what family is all about.

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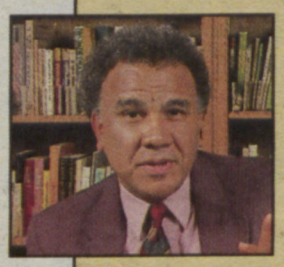
From welfare to Harvard to life as a noted speaker, humorist, and author—Samuel Betances has seen a lot. And he's got a lot to say about what he's seen. Meet this maverick who's teaching corporate America to value diversity.



10 FYI: Charter Schools

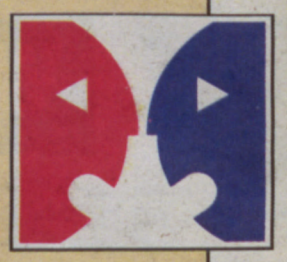
Charter schools are the chameleons of school reform—they take on the shadings of the people and places that create them. No two of them are alike. Two NEA members created one in St. Paul that pleases even the most ardent critics of the genre.

15 'Virtual Society'

For an hour a day, students at Bernalillo Middle School in New Mexico pay taxes, buy and sell several different products, elect officials, collect taxes—essentially, run their own town. What's in it for them academically?

55 Debate: Should Schools Distribute Condoms?

You bet, says a New Jersey school nurse: condoms promote good health, and nurses should, too. Please, no, counters an Alabama teacher: don't ask schools to add one more responsibility to their day's work.



Cover photo by Richard Nowitz

NEA Today October 1993
Vol. 12. No. 3

NEA TODAY is mailed to all NEA members. Annual subscription price: $2.32 (included in membership dues and available only as a part of membership). Institutional subscription price: $15.00 domestic and $22.00 foreign.

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NEA TODAY (ISSN 0734-7219) is published 9 times a year, monthly October, November, December, February, March, April, May and biweekly in September by the National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Second class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NEA TODAY, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Telephone: 202/822-7207.

Unsolicited feature stories and news items are invited, but NEA TODAY can make no advance committment to publish any manuscript. Manuscripts accompanied by self-addressed envelopes bearing sufficient postage will be returned within four months if rejected.

Although advertising is screened, advertisement does not imply NEA endorsement of the product or the views expressed.

NATIONAL NEWS

NEA'S PRESCRIPTION FOR THE HEALTH CARE CRISIS

Reform, Single-Payer Style

In Canada, everyone has health insurance, and nobody has to hassle with insurance companies. Will Congress move us in Canada's direction? Only if we make it clear that's what we want.

You don't have to tell Delree Tisdale that America is facing a health care crisis. Tisdale, a cafeteria worker at Mississippi's Port Gibson High, spends well over a third of her monthly paycheck on health insurance premiums.

"I'm going to have to drop my health insurance," she says. "I just can't afford to meet my bills."

Adds NEA member Tisdale: "I sure hope President Clinton will do something."

So do most all of NEA's over 2.1 million members. Health care in the United States costs so much that, in many school districts, NEA members are choosing between salary freezes or cutbacks on their insurance coverage. State governments, meanwhile, are slashing budgets for education because the fastest-growing state cost, after prisons, is Medicaid.

All the money spent on U.S. health care might be justifiable if those dollars were making Americans healthier. But they aren't. Just check the facts: The United States spends 33 percent more per capita on health care than Canada. Yet Canadians live, on average, two years longer than Americans, and Canada has a much lower infant mortality rate.

Until 1971, interestingly enough, there wasn't a dime's worth of difference between the United States and Canada on health care. But then the two nations went different ways. The United States bumped along with health care business as usual. Canada, meanwhile, totally overhauled its health care system.

The result? Today, according to a survey of citizen attitudes in 10 industrial nations conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, Canadians are the most satisfied with their health care system, Americans the least.

The Canadian system—usually called a "single-payer" system—is as simple and straightforward as ours is complex.

In Canada, everyone is guaranteed health insurance coverage. Canadians go to the doctor or hospital of their choice, and the bill goes to the government.

To keep costs down, the government bargains with doctors, hospitals, and other providers. That bargaining works—because the government, as the single payer of medical bills, comes to the table with considerable negotiating leverage.

Would the United States be better off with a system similar to Canada's? This past July, the over 9,000 delegates to the annual NEA Representative Assembly answered that question with a resounding "yes." They voted to place NEA on record in favor of a single-payer health care system.

Greg Jenson

Jackson, Mississippi, cafeteria worker Delree Tisdale hopes President Clinton and Congress will come up with a plan so she can afford health insurance.

But the delegates also recognized that a comprehensive overhaul of the health care system won't happen overnight. NEA will support, they noted, reform measures that move the United States toward a single-payer system.

Over recent months, NEA leaders and health care experts have been meeting with the Clinton Administration officials who are developing the Clinton health care plan. In these sessions, NEA has stressed the basic principles that are fundamental to the single-payer approach. Among them:

➤ All Americans must be covered in one health care system. No Americans should be denied coverage because they don't have a job, or good health.

➤ All medically necessary services should be covered. A new health care system should be comprehensive. Americans shouldn't have to purchase supplemental insurance.

➤ All Americans should be able to choose their own physician, but physicians and other providers should not be able to charge whatever the market will bear. Any new health care plan for America must set specific, enforceable limits on costs and create incentives that emphasize quality, preventive care.

➤ All Americans should pay their fair share. No employers should be able to freeload or shift costs onto their employees.

➤ All states should be given the flexibility to move into a single-payer system. The Canadian single-payer system was essentially enacted one province at a time. An American system might well come about one state at a time.

- ➤ Average out-of-pocket employee expenses for health care, 1980: $248
- ➤ Average out-of-pocket employee expenses for health care, 1991: $1,300
- ➤ Number of Americans without health insurance: 36 million
- ➤ Number of Canadians without health insurance: 0
- ➤ Percentage of U.S. Gross Domestic Product spent on health care: 12.4
- ➤ Percentage of Canadian GDP spent on health care: 9.0
- ➤ Average physician income, U.S. (1989): $155,800
- ➤ Average physician income, Canada (1988): $81,679

This issue of *NEA Today* went to press just days before President Clinton was scheduled to unveil the basic outlines of his Administration's health care reform proposal. His proposal is sure to come under immediate attack from the insurance and health industry forces who profit from the current status quo.

Whether what gets passed by Congress is what NEA members, our families, and our students need is, largely, up to us.

"We need to raise our voices," says NEA health care expert John Dunlop. "We've got to counter the power of the health industry special interests. We've got to press for single-payer principles."

In next month's *NEA Today*: a complete analysis of the Clinton Administration plan and the prospects for meaningful health care reform.

HEROES & ZEROES

NEA member Leslie Robins has more class than he's got cash—and that's saying a lot. Robins, a Wisconsin English teacher, won $111 million playing Powerball a few months ago—and didn't quit his job at Sabish Junior High. This year, he plans to donate his salary to the school, and he's asked teachers for a "wish list" of ways he can help out financially. Be more than envious—be proud he's a teacher.

Cashing in on a bad idea, Star Broadcasting is filling 1,000 school lunchrooms and hallways with music—and paid radio ads. Participating schools get a satellite dish and speakers in exchange for airing the station's fare from 7 a.m to 7 p.m. each day. For each 50 minutes of music, students hear 8 minutes of nationally sold ads and two minutes of ads they can sell locally. Turn around, Faust—there's a line behind you.

The Wilford Brimley Right-Thing-To-Do Award goes to Quaker Oats for its efforts to feed the hungry. Quaker's been quick to assist Second Harvest, a national food bank network, in bringing together donated food, volunteers, and hungry children. The three combine to form Kids Cafes—places in Savannah and Chicago where hungry kids get fed.

Not much is appetizing these days at Food Lion, the North Carolina-based supermarket chain charged with wage and hour law violations, plus 1,400 alleged violations of federal child labor laws. Although it admits nothing, Food Lion recently agreed to pay $16.2 million to settle various claims, including penalties for allowing teens to work around hazardous equipment.

One look at the Ohio state budget was enough to make courageous Cleveland legislator C. J. Prentiss give up food altogether. For seven days in June, she fasted to protest the state Senate's elimination of funding for school breakfasts. Prentiss ate again when nearly all monies for the school breakfast program were restored. Prentiss also won fans by pushing for a law giving teaching assistants who become teachers credit on the salary scale for time spent in the classroom.

COVER STORY

When BAD Things Happen To GOOD IDEAS

All eyes turned to Vermont three years ago when it pioneered student portfolio assessments statewide. But since then, the project has been under heavy criticism by teachers and researchers alike. What went wrong?

Cher Feitelberg is a fourth grade teacher who thinks student portfolios are the way to go.

She believes that portfolios, an alternative form of assessment that looks at a variety of student work over time, are an excellent way to chart her students' development and determine what each student knows and needs to learn.

But last year when Vermont-NEA discussed school restructuring with the state commissioner of education, Feitelberg listed student portfolios as among the difficulties faced by teachers.

"There are so many initiatives related to restructuring taking place at one time," Feitelberg explained, "but they're poorly coordinated, and the resources we need to make the changes aren't in place. I'm accountable to so many people for so many things," Feitelberg recalls saying, "that I'm being pulled in all directions. I no longer have enough time to do the single most important part of my job—to plan a dynamic and meaningful program for my students."

Says Vermont-NEA President Marlene Burke: "When Cher Feitelberg stood up, she spoke for hundreds of teachers across the state who'd grown frustrated at good reform ideas gone awry. It was an impassioned plea to say, 'Look at the way a broad-sweeping policy plays out in the classroom.' "

The portfolio as an alternative form of assessment has gained increasing popularity over the years. Essentially it's a "folder," a record of learning that's created from collections of a child's work or his or her reflections on that work. A writing portfolio, for example, may include samples of writing. The material may be collected by the student or in collaboration with the teacher and/or parent.

Across the country, portfolio assessment has been used in individual classrooms and schools before but never attempted on a large scale.

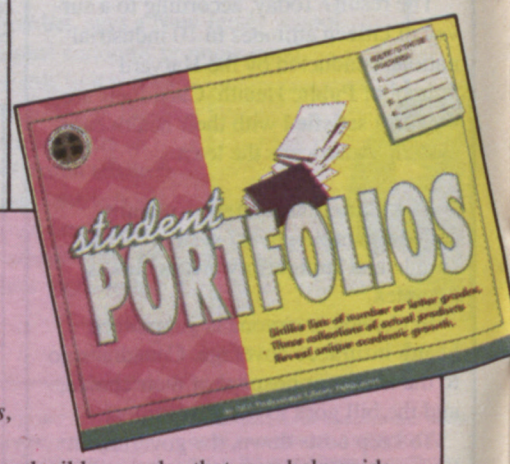
Until a few years ago, when Vermont launched an ambitious, statewide reform program. In 1990, Vermont funded a pilot program that allowed portfolios to be used as an alternative form of assessment. The first to pilot the program were fourth and eighth grade mathematics teachers at 137 schools. In 1991, the project was fully funded by the state legislature, and Vermont became the first in the country to use portfolios statewide.

"In the beginning, the state effort had the blessing and participation of our members," recalls Burke. "All teachers want what's best for students, and portfolios were a wonderful alternative to standardized testing."

Teachers were supportive, in part, because the program was designed to include them. They served on state committees formed to create guidelines and sample portfolios. For its part, the state promised that training would be an integral part of the preparation process.

"What's happened since then offers key lessons to anyone in education

The Portfolio Process



Do you want to know more about student portfolios from classroom colleagues around the country? The NEA Professional Library's *Teacher-to-Teacher* series offers *Student Portfolios*, a collection of stories and examples from classroom teachers, including reproducible samples that may help guide you in your own efforts to implement a portfolio assessment process.

Student Portfolios (Stock #2901-1-00) is available for $9.95 from the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 or call toll-free: 1/800/229-4200.

In addition, you can discuss student portfolios with your colleagues around the country through NEA Online, an electronic network you can access through your computer and modem. For more information, see page 16.

COVER STORY

Vermont teacher Cher Feitelberg believes in the value of student portfolios despite problems with the way the state set up the portfolio program.

reform—and a clear example of why change is so hard," says Burke. "By rushing headlong into statewide implementation, the portfolio project didn't have the necessary foundation to make it completely successful and it began unraveling."

Problems began popping up.

➤ Some teachers had to begin using portfolios without any training. During the first year, says Vermont math teacher Barbara Barbour, she and many others were left to their own devices. "I found that I wasn't fully prepared and, by the end of the first year, my students' portfolios were unscorable. After I attended the 1991 training session, I felt more at ease, but there are still teachers out there who face the same problems."

➤ Teachers were overwhelmed by the demands portfolio use put on their time. "Scoring a multiple-choice test takes about 5-10 minutes," adds Barbour. "With portfolios you spend 3 to 4 days conferencing with each student then spend even more time trying to score their portfolio. The program takes an average of six hours a week to coordinate and that's on top of my current classroom duties. With four classes of 25 students, a math teacher would have 110 portfolios in one year."

➤ There weren't enough consultants for training or follow-up training. "The state set up a network of 17 teachers who'd helped develop the program but the real culprit was time," says Burke. "The consultants were regular classroom teachers with time pressures of their own, so it's not surprising they weren't able to handle the calls for help."

➤ When the time came to score the portfolios, teachers experienced trouble again. "Because portfolios were meant for the individual, a group of scorers could spend hours coming to an agreement," says teacher Irina Markova.

➤ Teachers were also surprised to hear that the portfolios would be used to evaluate and compare schools. "That's been hard to accept," says Burke, "that an excellent tool for the teacher was going to be used to rate the school or compare schools and districts."

Daniel Koretz, a RAND corporation researcher who's written two reports on the portfolio project, concurs with Vermont teachers. "The greatest problem created by the portfolios wasn't what to do but when to do it," says Koretz. "Over 80 percent of Vermont's fourth grade teachers and 60 percent of eighth grade teachers surveyed often had trouble covering the required curriculum; 60 percent of both groups lacked time to prepare portfolio lessons."

Koretz' second RAND report questioned the reliability of the scoring and the use of the scoring to monitor and compare schools. In examining portfolios from the first full year of the program Koretz found the level of agreement too low for school comparisons. State officials, unable to use the portfolios as the sole assessment tool, scrambled to include other testing forms while stepping up training in portfolio scoring.

Still, says Koretz, the state's teachers and principals interviewed for his report said portfolios were a worthwhile burden.

And teachers across the state say the project has made a positive impact on their work in the classroom.

"Using portfolios has changed my approach to teaching math," says Barbara Barbour. "And it has changed the way students learn. They're doing more creative work by problem solving and they're excited by the process."

That's why Vermont's educators, together with state officials, continue to struggle to make the new program work in their state.

After Cher Feitelberg voiced her concerns, State Commissioner Rick Mills responded by visiting her classroom. "We had a wonderful conversation," says Feitelberg. "He talked to my students about their portfolios and then listened as I discussed my needs as a classroom teacher. He was willing to work with teachers like me to make this project successful."

For Feitelberg, such exchanges are critically important. "Because of Rick Mills' idea, I'm able to push the edge of the envelope of change in my classroom," says Feitelberg. "At the same time, the voice of the teacher-practioner isn't getting lost."

Heading into the 1993-94 school year, Burke says she's also encouraged by the program's impact on teaching. "We have more training and the state is working to include teachers in a more constructive way. We still need to resolve the scoring and evaluation issue, but all of us believe portfolios are a dynamic change.

This is an excellent tool for teaching and learning," Burke continues. "And educators like Cher Feitelberg, Irina Markova, and Barbara Barbour want to do things right, they want to provide the best for their kids. So, we continue to help fine-tune the process."

Vermont's experience isn't new when you consider other major changes that have been dropped teachers in other parts of the country.

State professional standards boards, for example, have been popular responses to the public cry for accountability. And in many states, including Arizona and Maryland, the boards have included teachers. But, unbelievably, some other states have failed to put teachers on the standards boards, which raises real questions about the boards' understanding of the realities of the classroom, and consequently, their effectiveness in setting professional standards.

Similarly, in Los Angeles, the school board imposed year-round schools to address overcrowding but failed to address other key issues.

Vermont-NEA's Marlene Burke cautions colleagues: "You can't expect reform to be successful unless deep structural change also takes place. If the foundation's not there," she says, "stop. Do not pass go. Build it."

—Anita Merina

Lessons Learned

What can other states learn from Vermont's experience? Vermont-NEA President Marlene Burke offers these tips if your state or district is considering student portfolios.

➤ Training must go hand-in-hand with any effort to implement statewide or district-wide, systemic change. All educators must have the essential information and skills *before* you begin.

➤ Allow time for training and provide the resources to give staff time to train or become trainers.

➤ Provide a sufficient number of consultants for follow-up training and questions.

➤ Make sure that the evaluation process is in place and tested before the process becomes mandatory.

"What people must remember is that portfolios are excellent tools for the educator and student," says Burke. "The key is providing the foundation to make sure the portfolios are used in the right way and for the right reason."

—A.M.

Photographs by Richard Nowitz

Cher Feitelberg's students work on several environmental projects that can be evaluated through their portfolios.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Girls and Bees

National Geographic Society

Are all competitions created equal, or do some favor boys over girls? The National Geographic Society and a Tennessee teacher are looking for answers.

Dan Lofkin

NEA member Carolyn Anderson's a geography ambassador-at-large.

Boys dominate the National Geographic Society's annual Geography Bee, and the Society wants to know why.

Of the many national competitions that attract widespread participation, boys and girls do equally well in some but not equally in others. In the National Geography Bee, boys do better at every level of competition.

Since it started in 1989, the Geography Bee has had only two female finalists and only one has ever been a national winner. This year, only 4,000 of the 19,000 school winners and two of the 57 state and territorial winners were girls. And, this past June, no girls made it to the final round in Washington, D.C.

Two who are wondering why the disparity exists and are doing something to change things are NEA member Carolyn Anderson and psychologist Lynn Liben.

A fifth-grade teacher from Nashville, Tennessee, Anderson has worked closely with the Geography Bee—as a moderator or hospitality chair—for many years.

"I am always amazed at how much better the boys do in competition," she says. "In class, girls shine in geography. They turn in their work, they score higher than boys on tests, and they're more interested in the subject." But, she notes, it's the boys who tend to borrow her geography books.

Now on leave, Anderson is in her second year as Tennessee's geography ambassador-at-large. She criss-crosses the state demonstrating new strategies for teaching geography.

To study why boys do so much better in the Geography Bee than girls, the National Geographic Society Education Foundation awarded a grant to Dr. Liben, a developmental psychologist, who chairs the psychology department at Pennsylvania State University, and Dr. Roger Downs, a Penn State geography professor.

One hypothesis Liben advances is that differences in geographic knowledge stem from gender-stereotyped expectations about geography in our society. "But," she cautions, "no one factor alone is likely to account for the huge gap."

Liben and Downs are now collecting baseline data from questionnaires and will later interview students and analyze group data. Their report, scheduled tentatively for release next summer, will analyze the impact of these four factors:

➤ *Schools.* Schools run the Bee, but do they make participation voluntary or mandatory? Do they limit it to the gifted and talented or to members of the geography club? Or do they invite everyone to join in?

➤ *Characteristics of students.* What do winners do in their leisure time—read maps and atlases? Or watch National Geographic Specials? Why do they participate in contests?

➤ *Competition and stress.* How nervous are participants in stand-up, high pressure contests? Do the boys and girls who were in the 1993 Bees differ on measures of physical and cognitive anxiety? Do they get stomach aches and clammy hands? Do they get nervous about how they are doing and lose concentration? How do they compare in self-confidence?

➤ *Societal expectations.* Who do students think should be geographers—only men, equal numbers of men and women, some combination of the two, or only women? Do girls who participate in the Bee have stereotypes about geographers?

Anderson wonders about culture when she teaches about the importance of geography. "Girls ask me what they could be if they got a degree in geography. And I have to think about that, because geography is a male-dominated field.

"I suggest they become cartographers or geography teachers," and Anderson continues, "I tell them that girls can be anything they want to be."

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

WASHINGTON WATCH

Person To Watch

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) is a new voice for education on the House Appropriations Committee. She's serving her second term in Congress, her first on the panel that holds the purse strings.

Best Win For Education Employees

If your school district paid for you to take a class, don't worry about the tax bill. Congress recently passed an NEA-backed law exempting employer-provided educational assistance from taxation. The new law makes lifelong learning a bit easier on the wallet.

One To Watch

Congress begins rewriting all federal elementary and secondary education programs this month. With virtually everything on the table, Congress has the opportunity to take a few steps forward. Possible advances include an expanded Chapter 1 compensatory education program and a new program to send federal dollars to the local level to meet locally determined needs.

And What You Can Do

President Clinton has proposed a new school-to-work program to help the 75 percent of American youth who don't complete college. Members of Congress need to hear from you about the importance of improving the transition from school to the workplace. Address mail to your members of Congress at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, or the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

Political Cartoon of the Month

Congressional Quote of the Month

"We are the only industrialized nation in the world that does not have a coherent, comprehensive system for preparing its young people for work."

—Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL), introducing the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1993

Local Look

ILLINOIS

Innovative Bargaining Produces Three Wins

"Win-win" bargaining produced three groups of winners in the northwest suburbs of Chicago—the 400 members of District #59 Education Association, school administrators, and their students.

As a result of the nontraditional approach to negotiations, school staff and administrators agreed that each of the district's 14 school buildings would receive $18,500 per year to meet the needs of at-risk students. School staff at each site would determine how to spend the money.

"At my school, we hired a full-time aide to work with students on social skills and boost self-esteem," explains local Association President Joy Mullen. Other schools hired staff to provide additional academic help.

"When you're not thinking just in terms of traditional bargaining," Mullen says, "everything's negotiable. The bottom line is that we're all interested in the students."

IDAHO

Association Runs Summer Camp

For two weeks this summer, school was a volunteer thing in Kuna.

Nearly 100 adults in the small town to the southwest of Boise volunteered—starting with members of the Kuna Education Association, who launched the idea for a two-week summer camp and made it a reality.

With $2,000 from the Idaho Education Association and $2,000 from community donations, school staff, parents, business leaders, and community folks were able to put together 10 fun-filled, free afternoons for hundreds of area kids.

Up to 300 students arrived each day at 12:15 for a free sack lunch. From 1 to 4, they went from class to class—learning such things as sewing, cooking, storytelling, string art, fishing, and jazz.

KEA members donated their time to teach, joined by volunteers like a principal, who taught bubble-making, and a local pastor who taught a computer class. Other Association members—teachers and support staff—shuttled kids by bus, worked the registration desk, and served lunch.

"We were looking for something that would benefit the children—and also get the whole community working together," says fourth grade teacher and camp co-chair Janet Gearhard. "I'd say we found it."

IN WEST VIRGINIA

Lila Hall

Some of the members of the West Virginia Education Association's new ESP local are pictured here. From left to right, in the front row are: Dianna Simpkins, Audra Stephens, Joanie Harper, Cosbie Farley, and David Adkins. Back row: Greg Jackson, Mike Damron, Dale Stephens, Pearley Jackson, and James Waller.

Wayne County Local Gets First Contract

Imagine a contract that gives uniforms to cooks, uniform allowances for bus operators, mechanics, and maintenance workers, and $15 a day to bus drivers who make special runs for vocational education students, a provision that may earn some drivers an additional $3,000 a year.

Now imagine that contract in West Virginia, a state where such provisions, let alone a bargained contract, are virtually unheard of for education employees.

The ground-breaking contract belongs to one of the West Virginia Education Association's newest affiliates, the Wayne County Bus Drivers-Educational Support Personnel Association. The new Association recently settled on the terms of the contract with the Wayne County Board of Education.

The Wayne County local represents some 200 school employees, including bus drivers, maintenance workers, cooks, classroom assistants, and secretaries. The group formed when members from two organizations separately representing bus drivers and support staff decided to form a single organization and join WVEA.

"We're very pleased with the new contract and the prospects for the coming year," says Dale Stephens, the Association's acting co-president. Mike Damron is the other co-president.

"We'll be working hand-in-hand to strengthen the WVEA," says Stephens, "and to continue to push for collective bargaining throughout the state. We believe in it, and we hope someday, education employees around the state will have contracts that they can count on."

ARIZONA

Paying for Professionalism

This fall the Flagstaff public schools moved full force into school restructuring, thanks to the leadership—and financial support—of the Flagstaff Education Association.

"The Arizona public schools have taken a hit in the legislature for four years," says FEA President Jim Collins, "which means that money has not been available for the changes that educators know are necessary." To get restructuring under way in Flagstaff, FEA first organized an ad hoc restructuring committee and invited some principals to join it.

The committee recommended more decision-making authority at the school level in five areas: curriculum, structure, management/leadership, parent/community involvement, and personnel.

Then FEA restructured its budget and offered 25 percent of it—$3,000 this year—to cover the extra costs (mainly in teacher time) of restructuring. These include the professional growth, curriculum sharing, and other activities that necessarily accompany restructuring.

"Teachers up here are feeling very good, membership is up, and the community knows the teachers are ready and willing to be part of change," Collins says.

TENNESSEE

Salary Increase? What Salary Increase?

For the past 10 years, the Cannon County Board of Education requested and received from the County Commission a total of $364,000 for teacher salaries. Teachers in this rural county 50 miles southeast of Nashville say they've never seen the money.

Cannon County Education Association leaders put the question directly to the school board at a recent negotiations session. Members of the board team admitted they'd gotten the money—and used it elsewhere in the school budget.

Where exactly did the money go? That's what CCEA plans to find out. The Association launched a radio and newspaper ad campaign that prompts taxpayers to call Board of Education members and ask what happened to the money. The newspaper ad lists board members names and phone numbers.

Bargaining efforts continue as CCEA seeks to ensure this situation doesn't happen again.

NEW JERSEY

Hands On—On the Air

Paterson Education Association members now produce, direct, light, shoot, and edit their own television program, which airs weekly on a local cable access channel.

The program, "PEA: Speaking Out," aims to showcase innovative classroom practices, discuss tough topics like drug and alcohol abuse, and introduce the local Association to members of the community.

"The best parts of our school system are the students in the classroom and the people who work with them every day," says PEA President Pete Tirri. "We wanted a program that spotlights them and also gives the community an opportunity to get to know our organization."

To handle the behind-the-scenes production work, PEA members needed to pursue professional development of an entirely new kind.

US Cable of Paterson offered some 15 PEA volunteers a 25-hour training course in the basics of television production. Most of the volunteers opted to work an additional 25 hours as interns to earn "independent television producer" certificates from US Cable.

The show—which airs just before "Paterson's Most Wanted", Tirri notes—has been well received by the community and by Association members.

State Side

MICHIGAN

Pulling the Rug Out

In a bizarre and unprece-dented move, Michigan's state legislature eliminated $6.3 billion in school property taxes without providing replacement dollars for public education. Without new legislation, money for education will run out at the end of this school year.

Michigan Education Association leaders—representing 135,000 educators statewide—were outraged. "They're playing Russian roulette with the education of our children," charges MEA President Julius Maddox.

The ploy—intended to force lawmakers to revamp the state's education finance system—will backfire, Maddox warns.

By the state constitution, only $3.8 billion can be replaced from state revenue sources. "The only option now is for the legislature to force local communities to once again bear the burden for making up the difference," Maddox says.

In addition, Maddox adds, anti-public education forces will attempt to tie new funding laws to laws that limit teacher salaries, privatize school services, and introduce vouchers.

NEVADA

Schools Get Funding Boost

Every Nevada state government program was cut this year—except K-12 education, which—hold on to your hats—got a boost.

"It's an incredible victory for education and educators," says Nevada State Education Association President Rick Millsap. Credit for the win—and the additional $34 million—goes to NSEA members.

"It's unfortunate that state employees, higher education, and other state programs have suffered so many funding cuts," Millsap adds. "But we're proud that NSEA succeeded in getting the message across that we simply can't afford to shortchange our children."

The new money will allow Nevada to continue its 16-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio in first and second grades and at-risk kindergarten, continue a program of counselors in at-risk schools, add 10 special education units, and put additional money on the bargaining table in most school districts.

THE FLOODS OF '93

Inundated Schools: How You Can Help

The pictures below of schools in Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri show the devastation caused by this summer's floods. You can help your colleagues by making a contribution to the special Association funds that have been set up to help flood victims. See the President's Viewpoint on page 2 for more details.

For four states—Iowa, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota—this past July was the wettest on record. The chart below, based on the 99 years between 1895 (when official record-keeping began) and 1993, shows exactly how wet or dry a state's July was when put into historical context. Those states with scores of 99 have had the wettest July they've ever had, while those with the score of 1 have had the driest.

Debra Angstead

Top photo: Missouri-NEA leaders and NEA President Keith Geiger survey a high school football field with flood waters nearly up to the goal posts.
Left: One of the hardest hit and most publicized flood-stricken communities was Valmeyer, Illinois, where residents voted to rebuild their town, including their schools, in another location.
Right: Flood waters creep in on North High School in Des Moines, Iowa.

How Wet Was Your July?

Alabama	5	Maine	8	Ohio	51
Arizona	1	Maryland	4	Oklahoma	22
Arkansas	4	Massachusetts	28	Oregon	88
California	66	Michigan	27	Pennsylvania	20
Colorado	2	Minnesota	98	Rhode Island	27
Connecticut	78	Mississippi	48	South Carolina	6
Delaware	31	Missouri	97	South Dakota	99
Florida	10	Montana	99	Tennessee	7
Georgia	6	Nebraska	97	Texas	8
Idaho	98	Nevada	12	Utah	4
Illinois	98	New Hampshire	7	Vermont	27
Indiana	52	New Jersey	23	Virginia	2
Iowa	99	New Mexico	7	Washington	93
Kansas	98	New York	11	West Virginia	3
Kentucky	20	North Carolina	8	Wisconsin	74
Louisiana	10	North Dakota	99	Wyoming	82

Source: Preliminary estimates from the National Climatic Data Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Information about rainfall in Alaska and Hawaii was not immediately available.

VERMONT

Two Groups Are Better than One

Vermont-NEA and the Vermont School Boards' Insurance Trust have joined forces to provide school employees with the best available health care at the lowest possible cost.

The partnership—Vermont Educators Health Initiative—will bargain with insurance carriers over rates, design benefits, expand wellness and consumer education programs for members, influence legislative change at the statehouse, and monitor change in Washington.

"We began to think about the power we would have by combining forces," explains Vermont-NEA's health issues expert Joseph Blanchette. "It's my hope that we'll work together and level our guns at the real culprits behind rising health care and health insurance costs. It's time to stop bashing the health care consumer for problems driven by the provider community.

"We will not be bystanders," Blanchette adds. "As major consumers, we're taking on our appropriate role as decision makers in the health care arena."

DELAWARE

Suing the State

The Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) has filed two lawsuits against the State School Board to protect the collective bargaining process, teacher planning time, and teacher professionalism.

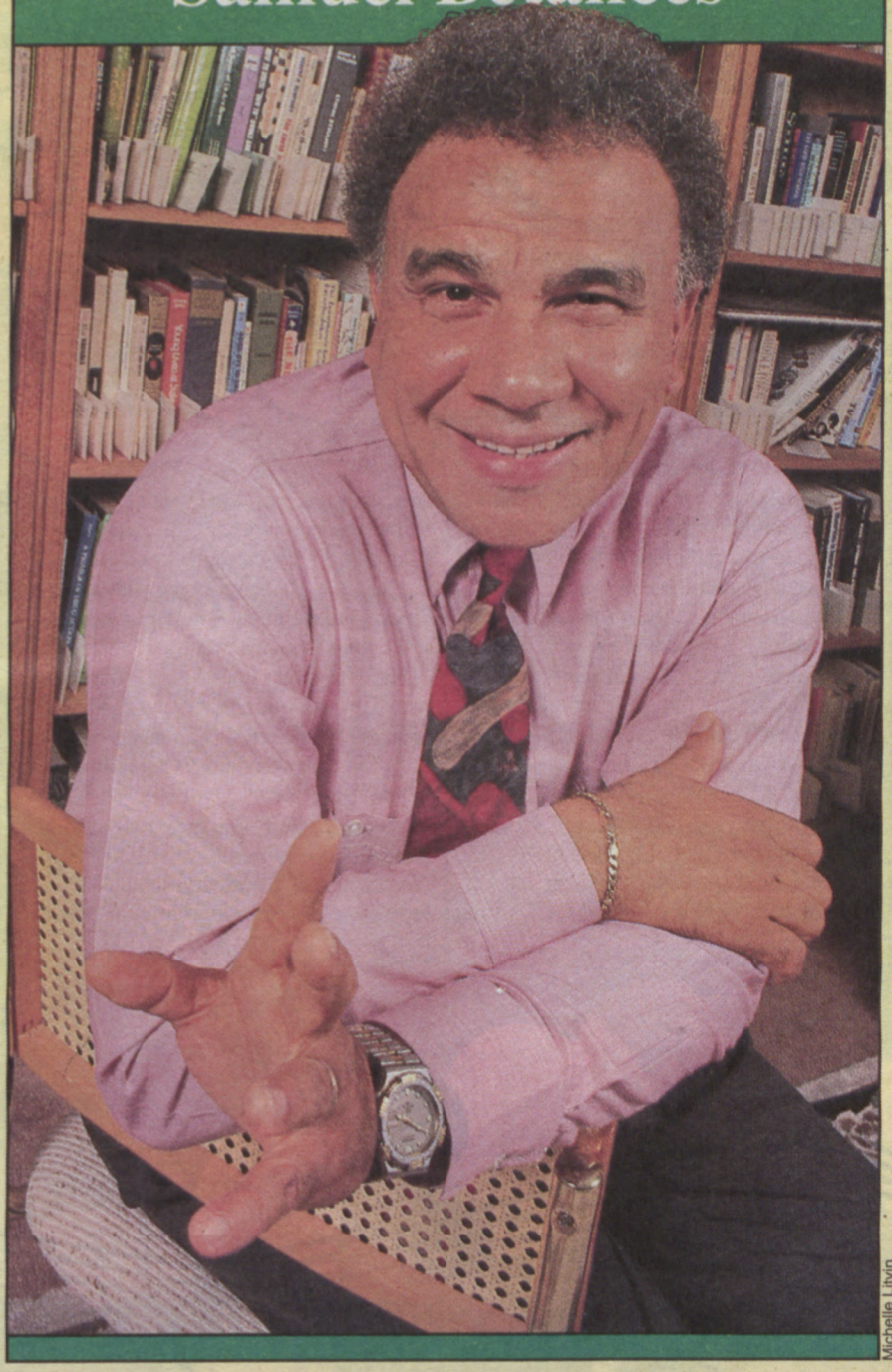
The issue revolves around a waiver the state board granted to the Christina School District, allowing the district to add five more minutes to each school day to make up for two days set aside for teacher planning time.

The board granted the waiver even though district officials hadn't resolved discussions with the Christina Education Association regarding the school day. When DSEA and CEA appealed the Board's decision and asked to be heard, the Board refused. So DSEA filed the lawsuits.

"Education reform won't happen with two days less and five minutes more," says CEA President Michaele Bishop. "Those reforms aren't educationally sound. Working cooperatively doesn't mean trying to work together after a decision's already been made."

Meet:

Samuel Betances



Michelle Litvin

Crusading Maverick

"I frankly never thought that a Puerto Rican former high school dropout who grew up on welfare would be welcomed by corporate America in helping to solve any problem," acknowledges Samuel Betances.

And yet AT&T and General Electric and Xerox, to name just a few, call Betances regularly to help them create a positive environment for workplace diversity.

A sociology professor at Northeastern Illinois University, the Harvard-educated Betances is a sought-after speaker and humorist, recognized author, and frequent consultant in business and education circles.

Betances has a lot to say to educators, particularly the ones he knew as a child growing up in urban New Jersey. In a wide-ranging interview with **NEA Today** *staff writer Victoria Lytle, he started there.*

What about your school days makes you angriest?
Even though I was Puerto Rican and came out of a broken home and my father had been an alcoholic and I had grown up on welfare and I had knife scars on my body, I was still Harvard material—and my teachers never noticed.

What was the problem?
They were failing me—and others like me—for not knowing what we hadn't been taught.

You talk with conviction about what it was like growing up in poverty. How poor were you?
Growing up, my family was so poor, somebody broke into our little apartment and didn't take anything. You may think you're a victim when robbers take your TV and VCR, and indeed you are. But you are a *real* victim when somebody ransacks through all of your family's possessions and doesn't take anything.

How did growing up on welfare affect your value system?
I came away with conflicting values. I had a negative image of myself, inasmuch as society sees people on welfare as virtually having leprosy. Another part of it is that the system creates dependence. There is a temptation that if you can work the system just right, you can get continual cash flow.

Did you confront that temptation?
I was very fortunate in that I met people who taught me that I have to be productive and pay my own way. And when I learned to do that, I got on track to become a very hardworking individual. Now I think I embody a near-obsession to be productive.

How many years of high school did you have?
I quit in my junior year and then returned because of the people who influenced my life. I made friends with a young man by the name of Roland Lenhoff. That changed my life.

How so?
We took speech class together, and Roland was amazed at the way I used gestures and the way my voice carried. He said if you teach me how to do stuff like that, I'll teach you how to say it right. Roland wanted to be a minister and outdo his father.

Did you learn from each other?
We made a deal. He told me how to memorize speeches of people in public life. I became a student of great speakers and preachers. Learning about them and studying them helped me perfect my stage presence and my ability to speak. That really saved my life, and to some degree, I still base much of what I've learned on that experience.

Why do you address U.S. corporate leaders about multicultural issues?
If corporate leaders don't understand that it's in our collective best interest to address these issues, the nation will be impoverished and we'll make a mockery out of democracy.

In other words, we won't achieve social justice, we won't be able to make the kind of winning teams—whether in education, business, politics, religion, or other areas of public service—that will enable us to have the quality of life that's healthy in a heterogeneous society like ours.

I'm proud of the fact that my mission to make total quality management really work makes sense to corporate leaders.

What do you tell them?
First, I tell them that without total quality respect—without TQR—TQM won't work. I tell them if you don't hire those of us who speak two languages, bring passion to the job, have a sense of humor, and appreciate diversity, you won't penetrate important markets. I tell them that they need to embrace diversity for the bottom line.

When I do my best work, the audiences I address come to see diversity as a plus instead of a minus. People walk away knowing that the issue of diversity isn't about taking a Black person to lunch or being kind to an Asian or saying "hola" to an Hispanic.

It's about making it possible for all of us to make larger contributions to society than the ones we've been allowed to make in the past.

How do you reach out to minority students?
I tell them it's normal for them to fail a middle-class examination if they come from the underclass, because that kind of test was made with middle-class people in mind.

How can educators help students from the "underclass"?
Assign the student who passed brilliantly to help them so they can do better than a *C*. That guarantees that the ones with the *A*s will continue to have *A*s.

Create a cooperative learning environment: be real, laugh with them, care for them, and tell them that you were hired to teach them, not to fail them.

What can educators do to keep kids from dropping out?
The single most important thing for kids who are at risk of dropping out is one positive attachment in school. It doesn't matter if it's the counselor or custodian or principal or teacher. Don't give up on everyone because you can't save everyone.

Why do you use humor to get your points across?
Because humor is the sugar that makes the medicine go down. With humor, we laugh together, so we have a common experience that we can't deny.

It's a way of showing you're human and that you're willing to reduce the level of authority so that you can be inclusive and identify.

Without humor, you'll cause injury when you challenge people to be better.

Can you give an example of how you use humor to improve race relations?
My Puerto Rican heritage allows me to heighten consciousness of the media's use of scripts that recycle debilitating stereotypes of Puerto Ricans. For example, I tell my students that West Side Story couldn't have been written by a Puerto Rican.

"Why?" they ask.

"Because you can't call for Maria at three o'clock in the morning in a Puerto Rican neighborhood and have only one window open!"

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Daydream Believers

Teachers Terry Kraabel and Milo Cutter always wanted to create their own school. Now they have. Their imaginative little school is totally public — yet no central office bureaucrats are scrutinizing their every move. What's their secret? A new twist on education reform called 'charter schools.'

Ever daydream about creating your own school? About joining with a couple colleagues and trying out new approaches to education—without getting second-guessed by school officials who haven't been in a classroom for years?

Meet Terry Kraabel and Milo Cutter, two NEA members in Minnesota who've started their very own school.

Their school, located in St. Paul, is called the City Academy, but don't let that private school-sounding name fool you. The City Academy is a public school—just not an ordinary one.

The student body consists of only 38 high school-age youngsters. The faculty: three full-timers, plus "adjunct" faculty for arts and some basic subjects. The site: a 20-year-old, poured-concrete converted community recreation center. The class size: one to 10. The principal: there isn't any. No superintendent or school board either.

What kind of school is this? The City Academy is a "charter school," one of less than a dozen now in operation across the United States.

"Charter schools come in a variety of forms," says Andrea DiLorenzo, an NEA staffer who's closely monitoring the phenomenon. "But the basic definition that state legislatures are using is fairly standard. A charter school is a public school developed by practitioners who exchange the normal regulations and securities of traditional public schools for school site autonomy."

To get a "charter" to run their own school, educators put together an "outcomes-based education program" that spells out what students will have achieved at the end of a limited—usually three- or five-year—time period. How the students are taught is, essentially, left up to the educators in the charter school.

If, after three or five years, the learning outcomes are met, the school can keep its charter and stay open. If not, the school risks charter revocation — and closure.

The City Academy is now entering its second year, and co-founders Kraabel and Cutter are relishing every moment.

"It's the kind of academic environment," says Cutter, "that I would have once only daydreamed about."

At the City Academy, Cutter and Kraabel are too busy to daydream. Their students are all kids who have had trouble fitting in at traditional schools. To help them succeed, Cutter and Kraabel have developed a most nontraditional education program.

The school campus is, in effect, the community. All students are required to do community service, and, with the school's small classes, it's easy to pack up and head off to a community site for a lesson on one topic or another.

Each teacher at the City Academy completes a daily evaluation for each class. Standards are high. The passing grade in any course is 80.

"If a student doesn't make 80 percent," says Kraabel, "the student's not done with the class."

Cutter teaches English and social studies, Kraabel physical education, health, and construction skills. They make all the decisions collaboratively with other staff.

"In a traditional setting," says Cutter, "it's possible to say, hey, this wasn't my

Larry Salzman

CHARTER SCHOOLS

AP/Wide World Photos

A student at the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota, works on a community service project, assisted by teacher Milo Cutter.

idea. Here you can't do that. Everything is our idea, and, if it isn't working, we're the ones responsible for changing it."

"As a teacher, having the freedom to teach the way you want to teach is so much better," says Kraabel. "Teaching here is so different—no adversarial role with a principal, no us versus them. It's so nice to sit down with staff and communicate how we can do our jobs better instead of talking about how to stop the students from smoking in the bathroom."

Minnesota is one of the eight states that have passed charter school laws since 1991. The other seven: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. Puerto Rico's legislature passed a sweeping charter law this past summer.

The charter laws so far enacted vary considerably. All grant autonomy and authority to individual charter schools and diminish—if not totally eliminate—the control of local school boards. State boards of education or chief state school officers are usually granted the final discretion to approve or revoke charter petitions.

The state charter school laws usually allow state per-pupil funding to follow charter enrollees. Charters are encouraged to seek private funding as needed, since they have no means to raise additional public funds. The City Academy in St. Paul has done just that. The school's computers, for instance, were donated by a local utility company.

In Minnesota, charters may be created only by licensed educators. The Georgia and New Mexico charter laws allow only educators in existing public schools to start charters. In Wisconsin, school boards themselves may create charters.

Charter school founders Terry Kraabel and Milo Cutter are thriving in their small St. Paul, Minnesota, school, which has just 38 students.

In California, Colorado, and Massachusetts, any non-sectarian group may petition for charter status. Massachusetts law even permits for-profit businesses to create charters.

That sort of provision could open the door to a wide range of abuses (see accompanying story), and, this past July, the over 9,000 delegates to NEA's annual Representative Assembly took a hard look at the potential and the perils of the charter school movement.

NEA, the Representative Assembly delegates concluded, supports the concept of publicly created and publicly accountable charter schools created by public school employees. These schools should respect negotiated contract safeguards and be subject, on a regular basis, to adequate educational assessment and fiscal evaluation.

Employees, the delegates emphasized, should be actively involved in the "design, implementation, and governance" of charters and other nontraditional school option programs.

No employees could be more involved in the operation of a school more than Terry Kraabel. Milo Cutter, and their colleagues at the City Academy. They meet, as a staff, twice a week to integrate the curriculum and plan team-teaching approaches.

"We can devise a curriculum that we feel is meeting the needs of students," says Cutter. "We don't have to go to some school district curriculum committee, then the school board, and back again. We can make immediate adjustments."

As a charter school, adds Kraabel, the City Academy has the opportunity to opt out of state educational mandates.

"We don't opt out of any," says Kraabel. "We're not trying to cut corners or look for the easy way. We still have all the paperwork to do. But we can make decisions so much quicker. When we have a problem, it's not come back next Tuesday. We fix the problems instead of fixing the blame."

"We all come to learn, us and the students," adds Cutter. "Charter schools can be seeds of hope in the educational earth."

That's also the hope of the president of NEA's Colorado state affiliate, Dan Morris. The Colorado Education Association has been working with parents and state school officials to fashion legislation that would enable charter schools to operate only within public school settings.

"We view the charter school," says Morris, "as one of many possible vehicles for promoting change and innovation within the public schools."

For that dream to be realized, Morris notes, charter school-enabling legislation needs to be carefully crafted.

"I don't think we want to create a system of specialized boutique schools," says Morris. "We're working to make sure that whatever charter schools are created are research and development centers, not elite retreats."

"Elite retreat" or "yuppie boutique" is the last thing any observer would call St. Paul's City Academy. The school's students and teachers live and work amid the daily struggle of urban America.

In one alcohol-related incident last year, a student was stabbed to death by her boyfriend. This year, says Kraabel, the students are starting to working "on how to intervene in alcohol problems."

"We're aiming to have this school woven into the fabric of our students' lives," says Cutter. "The school is a beginning point, not an end-all."

That may be an apt description of the charter school movement as a whole: a beginning point for meaningful educational change, not an end-all in itself.

Dreams Could Turn into Nightmares

St. Paul's City Academy is charter schooling at its best. But the idea of charter schooling isn't just attracting dedicated educators. Private, profit-making entrepreneurs are increasingly eager to create their own charter schools or form partnerships with charter operators. The likely end result? Charter schools run and governed not by practitioners, but by businesses that could hire educators as employees without the contracts and legal safeguards that now protect them within the public system.

NEA's new Center for the Preservation of Public Education is working with NEA state affiliates to try to prevent this sort of exploitation. Some examples of the issues under debate:

Teacher licensure and certification. NEA state affiliates are pushing for charter provisions that allow only licensed or certified educators to create and teach in charter schools. The Minnesota Education Association successfully fought and won such a provision in 1991.

Approval for charter applications. NEA state affiliates are attempting to ensure that public school educators have a say about charters created in their districts. In California, half of all teachers in an existing school, or 10 percent of an entire district's teaching force, must approve a charter petition. In New Mexico, 65 percent of teachers must approve a petition for a charter to be created in their schools. In Georgia, a two-thirds secret ballot vote of all faculty and instructional staff is required before a school can be created.

Limits on the number of charters. New Mexico has set a limit of five charters statewide. In Colorado, 13 of the state's 50 charter petitions are reserved for those creating programs to increase educational opportunities for at-risk students.

Charters and existing public schools. NEA affiliates are promoting legislative provisions that allow the creation of charters from within existing public school districts. These provisions can help prevent charters from becoming a means to privatize public schools.

Local accountability and control. The Colorado Education Association has successfully lobbied to keep local school boards as the final authority in approving charters, though petitioners turned down by a local board may appeal to the state board of education.

Appropriate educational assessment. NEA state affiliates have been fighting to ensure adequate assessment methods and public accountability.

Funding and fiscal accountability. NEA affiliates are working for adequate funding for charters, but not at the expense of traditional schools.

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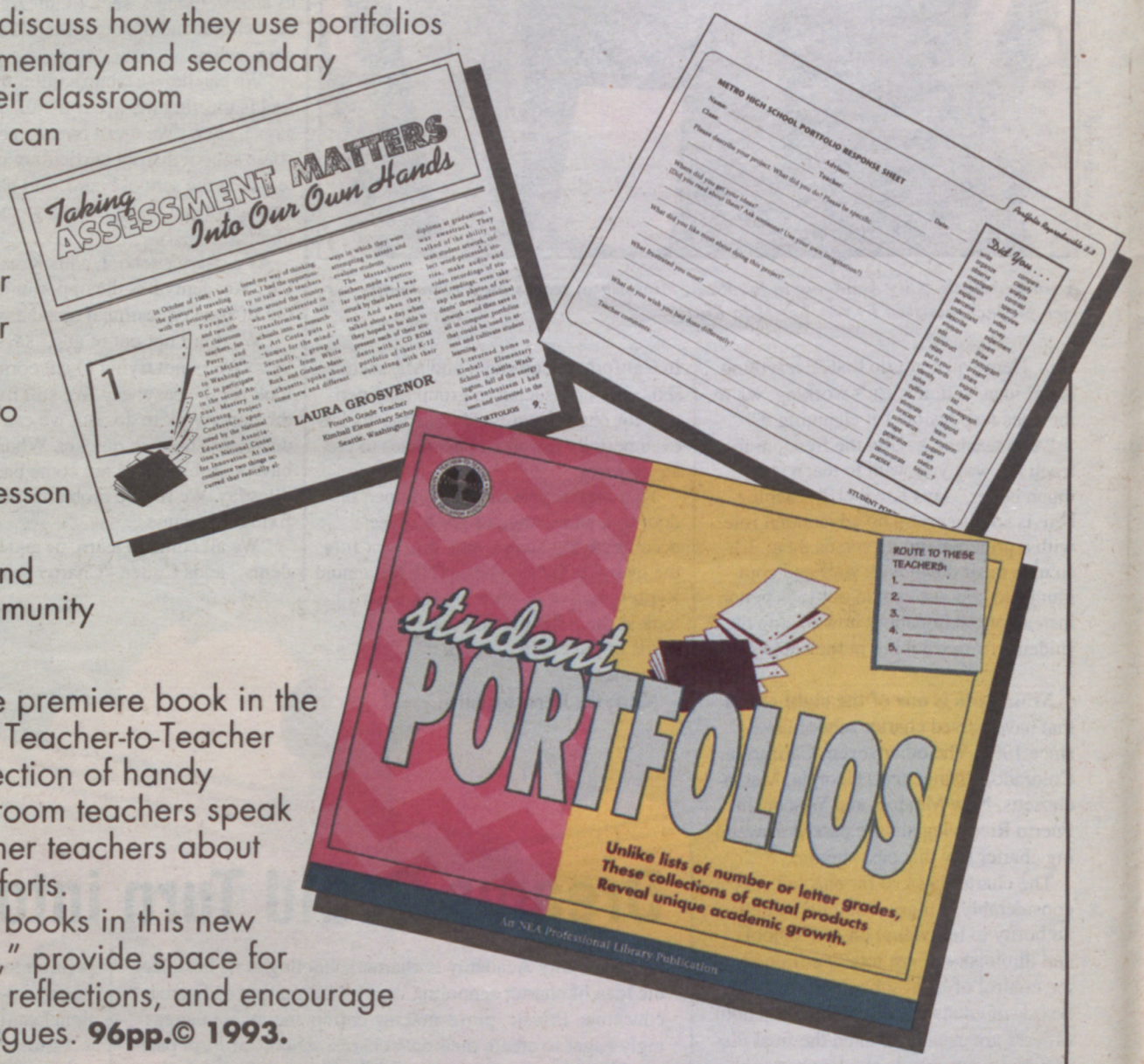
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Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn

Dr. Barry Zuckerman is a pediatrician and professor of developmental and behavioral pediatrics, Boston City Hospital/Boston University School of Medicine. Dr. Zuckerman works with the Child Witness to Violence Project, a counseling and outreach project for young children and their families.

WITNESS TO VIOLENCE

How does exposure to violence affect children?
Children who witness violence are likely to be developmentally damaged—they can't concentrate in school, they experience flashbacks in the forms of dreams and nightmares, they become more dependent on the people around them. Two- and three-year-olds may stop eating and so fail to thrive. Others eventually engage in risky behavior such as alcohol or drug abuse, or even turn to violence themselves.

Is that the reason for the Child Witness to Violence Project?
Yes. We operate an outpatient pediatric clinic here at Boston City Hospital. Like many urban clinics, we found that many of our young patients had heard gunshots outside their homes, witnessed violent attacks, or had a family member involved in a violent act.

Then we conducted a study, interviewing 115 mothers about the violence their children were exposed to.

We discovered that one of every 10 children who'd arrived at the clinic had witnessed a shooting or stabbing by the age of six.

We also found other studies with equally alarming results.

Such as?
In a New Orleans survey of elementary school-aged children, over 90 percent of those questioned had witnessed some type of violent incident, 70 percent had seen weapons used in some way, and 40 percent had seen a dead body.

In Los Angeles, researchers estimate that between 10 and 20 percent of all homicides committed each year in the city are witnessed by children.

There are also at least 3.3 million children who may be witnessing domestic violence each year.

How does your project help the children of Boston?
We focus on preschoolers, because they seem to be especially vulnerable to the traumatic effects of witnessing violence. A young child's attempts to master age-appropriate fears of monsters under the bed are severely undermined when the child needs to sleep under the bed to dodge real bullets or avoid watching a violent fight between adults.

We work with hospital emergency rooms, and with pediatric and psychiatric clinics, as well as the Boston police department, to identify children for referral.

Then we provide counseling and advocacy services to the children and their families. It's important to act as quickly as possible.

Why?
Because children, especially young children, internalize trauma. They can't articulate it verbally, but you can see it in their drawings and play.

For instance, one young boy who witnessed the death of his mother drew pictures of boys with gaping mouths, screaming silently.

Another child's drawing showed the path of a bullet that missed her and hit a classmate who was on the bus. She believed the bullet was meant for her. Other children exhibit signs of post traumatic stress disorder which results from exposure to a violent event or a natural disaster. This most often affects war veterans, but it can occur in children.

What are the symptoms?
Adults experience flashbacks, but children reexperience the trauma in nightmares and fantasies. They talk over and over about the trauma or about their fear that it will happen again.

Children may become highly agitated or withdrawn. They may engage in risky behaviors or become more pessimistic about the future. These may not always indicate PTSD, but if the child has experienced some trauma, it can't be ruled out.

How is PTSD treated?
Once a child has been diagnosed with PTSD, he can be referred for therapy: drawing, drama, play, stories—all designed to help the child deal with the experience.

What can school employees do?
Be aware of possible behavioral changes. What's most important is that children have the opportunity to talk about what they've experienced, so your first step is to listen. It may be necessary to refer the child for therapy. It's best when there's a school-based health clinic to handle the referral, but what matters most is that the child gets help.

How can schools become safe havens again?
The real question is how to make communities safe again. Schools, community agencies, officials, pediatricians—we all need to come together to develop safe places for children.

We have to call for tough measures like gun control if we want to help children who live in fear or who've become numb to the violence around them. We have to accept responsibility and get to work to fight this epidemic of violence.

Are there resources available for school employees?
Child Witness to Violence has a training program for elementary and middle school teachers in our area, because we believe educators must be part of the solution.

Contact Betsy McAlister Groves, Child Witness to Violence Project, Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Boston City Hospital, 818 Harrison Ave., Boston, MA 02118.

There's also a new book, *Let's Talk About Living in a Violent World*, that I recommend. The author is James Garbarino, PhD, Erickson Institute, 25 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.

"He who would be well taken care of must take care of himself."
W.G. Sumner

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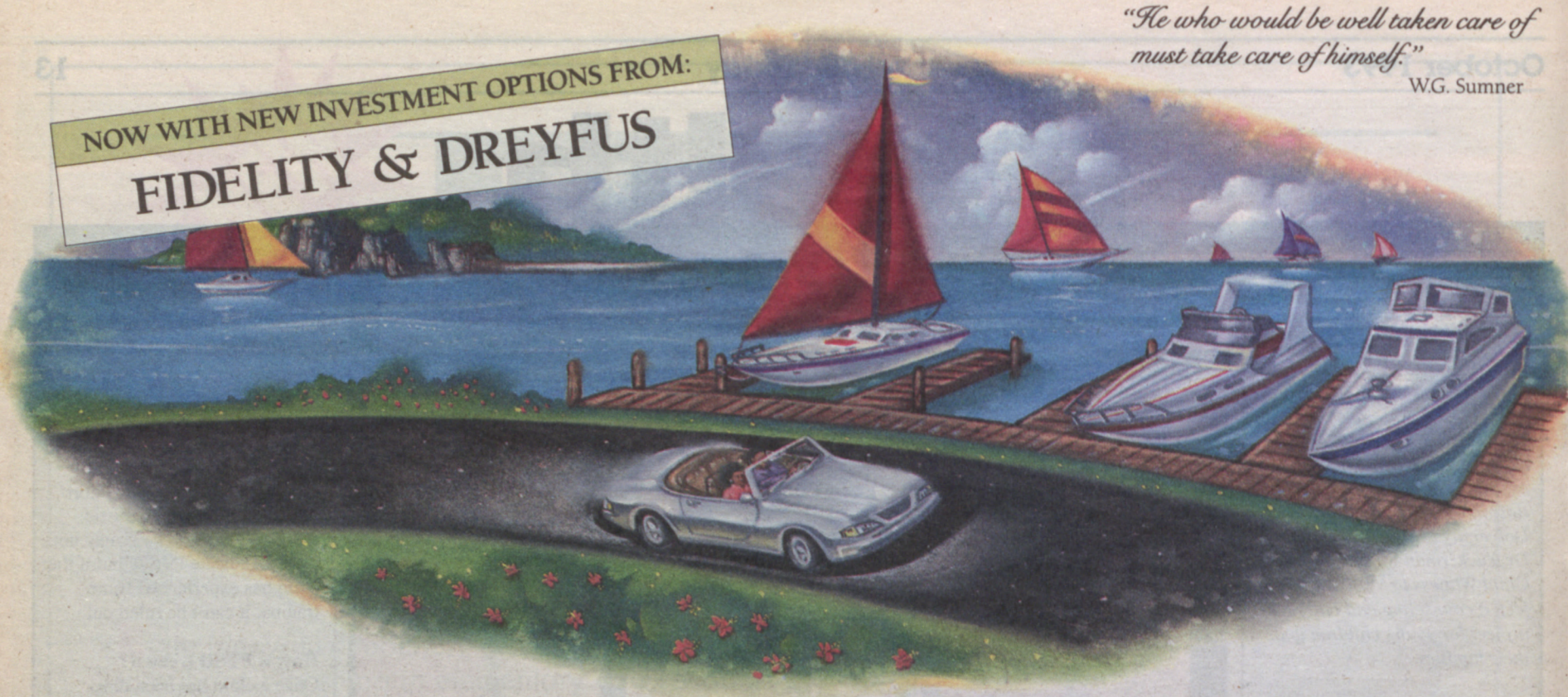

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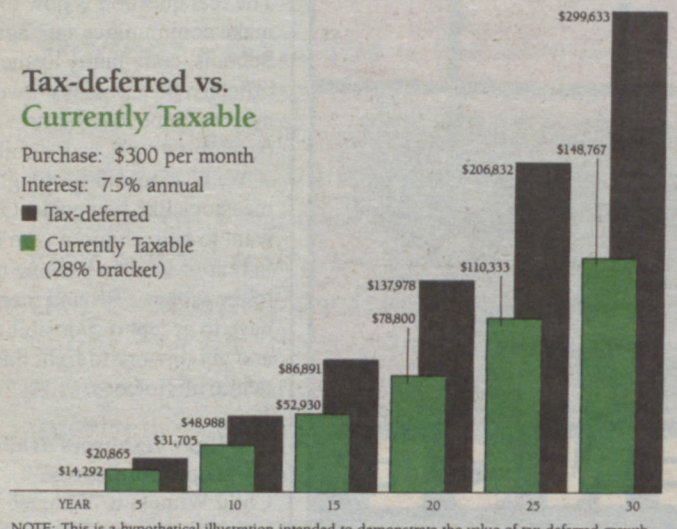

NOTE: This is a hypothetical illustration intended to demonstrate the value of tax-deferred growth, based upon the above assumptions. It is not intended to reflect the actual past or future performance of the tax-deferred investment. In the calculations, a $30 administration fee and a 1.3% asset fee are deducted each year; no Contingent Deferred Sales Charge is deducted. Withdrawals by purchasers prior to age 59½ may be subject to a 10% income tax penalty.

KEEP MORE OF WHAT YOU EARN.

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Second, your investment earnings grow *tax-deferred*, so you pay no taxes on that money until you retire and begin making withdrawals—when you may be in a lower tax bracket.

And third, you can roll over your currently taxable investments into NEA Valuebuilder. Instead of giving away 28% or more of your earnings each year to the government, you can realize faster, tax-deferred growth on that money as well. The chart clearly shows how much faster your money can grow tax-deferred.

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According to recent statistics, you can expect to be retired for 20 or more years. After working for so long and doing so much for others, those years are meant for you to enjoy.

Start planning to make your dreams come true. Call an NEA Valuebuilder representative at 1-800-637-4636, or send in the coupon today to find out how to pay less in taxes and keep more of your money for a better retirement.

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Yes. Send me the facts for my future with NEA Valuebuilder.
For more information, return this coupon or call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636**. I will read all information carefully before I invest or send money. (Not available in all states.)

☐ Yes, please rush me complete information about the NEA Valuebuilder Annuity retirement program.
☐ I need information to obtain a Payroll Reduction Slot in my school district.

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Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Is this a new address? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Social Security No. _____ Name of School Building/District _____

Mail to: **NEA Member Benefits**, P.O. Box 576, Oakland, MD 21550-9972 TVB103

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The Internal Revenue Code prohibits certain distributions attributable to salary reduction contributions before an individual reaches age 59½, separates from service, dies, or becomes disabled or experiences a hardship as defined by the Code.
Not available in all states.

Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

Photographs by Alexandria King

Crimestoppers Brianne Gutierrez and Victoria Montoya give Nathan Ortiz a ticket for running between classes.

Teacher Theresa Chinana (above right) watches "IRS employees" Carlos Sanchez and Alison Courtois update their files.

Teacher Gilbert Balderrama was one of the teacher-founders of Econopolis.

Making a School-Wide Simulation Succeed

In Bernalillo, New Mexico, middle school kids learn academics by running their own city.

Just north of Albuquerque sits Econopolis, a small town populated by 512 six, seventh, and eighth graders. Developed by teachers at Bernalillo Middle School, Econopolis is a simulated micro-city of producers, sellers, buyers—even tax collectors.

Some of the town's citizens are in fast food—operating a deli, a candy shop, and an ice cream shop. Others run an art gallery and a print shop. Still others run the banks that lend the "rios" (the currency, which is named for Bernalillo's river, the Rio Grande) for the fledgling enterprises.

The businesses are expected to make a profit, from which the student entrepreneurs pay their tuition and taxes. The taxes go to pay the salaries of the kids who work in the courts, the city, and the internal revenue service.

Since the spring of 1992, for one period every day, the school's eighth graders (the simulation was expanded to the sixth and seventh grades the second year) have been trying to provide government services or turn a profit in an assortment of small businesses.

"Everything is modeled after a real city," says eighth grade language arts teacher Gilbert Balderrama, past president of NEA-Bernalillo. "And everything is geared to a true learning experience."

"This is my 20th year teaching," says fellow language arts teacher Susan McGill, "and it's the best thing I've ever done."

Econopolis works because five preconditions for change existed before it even got under way.

First, a core of eighth grade teachers knew how simulations worked from past experience.

Second, the group had decision-making authority. So when the eighth grade group, known as "The Family," decided to run with the simulation idea, they had the power to make the decision stick.

Third, the Family was, in the principal's words, "a group of risk takers." In 1990, the faculty voted to join the innovative Coalition of Essential Schools, put together by Brown University's Ted Sizer.

Fourth, The Family had a solid educational rationale for the innovation they wanted to undertake.

Finally, they had money: $10,000 in federal P.L. 874 money for Indian students. The city of Bernalillo is next to five pueblos, and half the middle school's students are American Indians.

Since that first year, Econopolis has become quite famous. It was featured last year on an episode of *Teacher TV,* coproduced by NEA and The Learning Channel, which will be rebroadcast on October 31. (To purchase a video of the episode for $15.95 plus $2.50 p&h, call the NEA Professional Library at 800/229-4200.)

Within the school, math teachers have seen improvement in academics, especially in the test scores of the kids working in banks.

"I saw improvement in scores from language arts," Balderrama adds, "and the practice at social interaction is important."

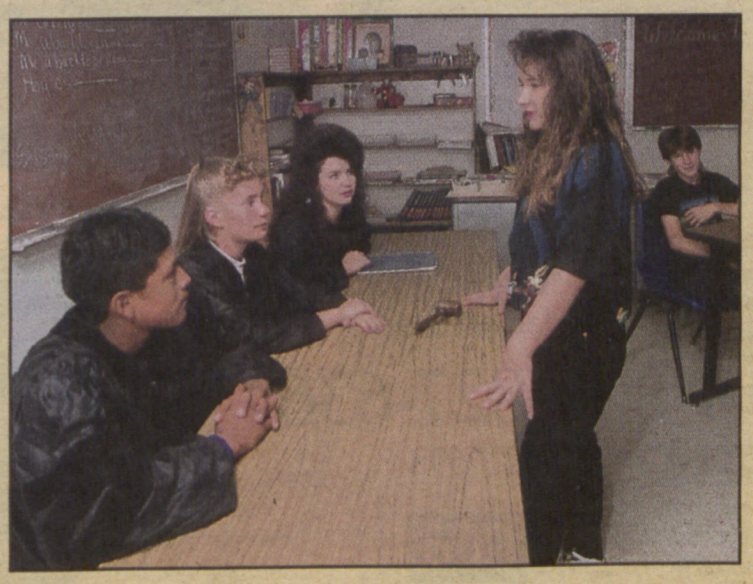
As is the practical understanding of inter-relationships among disciplines that students get from the writing, calculating, and record-keeping they do.

And teachers don't discount the enthusiasm that Econopolis generates. "School attendance has skyrocketed," says computer teacher Kileen McNutt-Sanchez.

But aside from all that, Econopolis is a "trip"—for staff and students both. "I love the simulation and the excitement of the project," Balderrama says.

For the students, it's that chance to be—almost—in the marketplace.

—Nancy R. Needham



Defendant Cory Parks pleads her case before "judges" Jared Quintana, Adriana Lopez, and Nicole Martinez.

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LEGAL TIMES

Congratulations! It's A Law

Just two weeks after President Clinton's inauguration last January, Congress passed the NEA-backed Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), a strong new federal law that guarantees the right of most employees to unpaid leave to care for family members or to receive medical treatment.

FMLA became effective on August 5, 1993, with one exception—employees covered by existing collective bargaining agreements won't be covered until February 5, 1994.

To help you understand the impact of the law, *NEA Today* staffers posed the following questions to Michael Simpson, an attorney in NEA's Office of the General Counsel.

What rights does FMLA create?
Under FMLA, eligible employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year to care for a newborn or newly-adopted child, to care for a child, parent, or spouse with a serious health condition, or to care for the employee's own serious health condition.

Who's eligible for FMLA leave?
Two criteria must be met: First, the employee must work for a "covered" employer, i.e., an employer with at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius. This will include most school districts and institutions of higher education.

Second, the employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours for the employer over the previous 12 months.

Does the 1,250-hour requirement apply to teachers?
Under the FMLA regulations, "professional employees," including "full-time teachers," are presumed to meet the 1,250-hour requirement. If necessary, teachers can count "time spent at home reviewing homework and tests" to reach the 1,250-hour threshold.

Will all school support employees be eligible for FMLA leave?
Not necessarily. For example, a support worker who works seven hours a day for 180 days during a 12-month period (1,260 hours) will be eligible for FMLA leave, while one who works six hours a day for 180 days (1,170 hours) will not be eligible.

Can the employer reduce health insurance coverage for an employee who goes on FMLA leave?
No. The employer is required to maintain health insurance coverage "on the same basis as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period."

Can employees be made to give advance notice before taking FMLA leave?
Yes, in certain circumstances. If the need for leave is "foreseeable," e.g., the birth of a child, then the employee must give the employer 30 days notice. In addition, an employer can require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition.

Do employees have the right to reemployment after taking FMLA leave?
Yes. Employees returning from FMLA leave are entitled to be restored to their original jobs or to "equivalent positions" with the same pay, benefits, responsibilities, and other employment terms.

In defining an "equivalent position," the regulations provide that "the employee must be reinstated to the same or a geographically proximate worksite where the employee had previously been employed."

When it's your turn to care for a newborn or a sick family member, rest easy. Your job rights will be protected by the new Family and Medical Leave Act.

Are there any special rules for teachers who take FMLA leave?
Yes. The regulations contain certain "special rules" for "instructional employees" employed at the K-12 grade level.

Such employees who take intermittent leave or leave near the end of an academic term can be required to take FMLA leave in blocks of time.

The term "instructional employee" specifically includes teachers, athletic coaches, driving instructors, and special education assistants such as signers for the hearing impaired. Specifically excluded from the special rules are higher education faculty, teacher assistants or aides, counselors, psychologists, curriculum specialists, cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, and bus drivers.

How will these special rules work?
The rules are complex, but here are a few examples of how they work.

➤ If you request "intermittent leave"—for example, two days a week for a 10-week period—your employer can require you to take leave for the entire period of care/treatment, or to transfer to a temporary, alternative position that has equal pay and benefits.

➤ Depending on when your leave starts, how long it lasts, and when you plan to come back, your school district can require you to take leave to the end of the semester. For example, if you start a four-week leave six weeks before the winter break, your school district can require you to take the full six weeks off.

If you have specific questions, please contact your local or state Association.

Can unions negotiate collective bargaining agreements that afford employees greater rights than those provided under FMLA?
Yes. This is an extremely important provision. A union, for example can negotiate a contract that extends the right to family and medical leave to all employees, not just those who work more than 1,250 hours a year.

Similarly, a union can bargain for the absolute right of the employee to return to the same job and for greater protection for instructional employees who are subject to the "special rules."

State legislatures also can pass legislation that grants workers greater (but not lesser) rights than those under FMLA.

What are the remedies for violations of FMLA?
An employee can file a lawsuit in federal or state court for damages, injunctive relief, attorneys' fees, and costs. The Secretary of Labor also is authorized to investigate and attempt to resolve complaints and to sue employers who violate FMLA.

—Michael Simpson
Office of General Counsel

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Once you enroll for NEA life insurance, your payment will never change—and the younger you are when you enroll, the lower your payments will be. See chart at right for your affordable NEA group rate.*

Age at the time you enroll	Your fixed monthly payment
Under 35	$ 4.30
35-39	$ 5.80
40-44	$ 6.80
45-49	$ 7.50
50-54	$ 8.25
55-59	$10.50
60-64	$13.25
65-69	$15.50

*All eligible members up to age 50 are covered for $25,000; up to age 70, for $10,000. At age 70 and over, $1,000 of coverage is available for $5.45 monthly. Accident (AD&D) insurance is included at no additional cost!

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**State regulations prohibit charging this coverage to your credit card in the following states: AL, CT, DC, FL, HI, KS, MD, MS, NC, NH and OH. Residents of these states may be billed directly by Prudential.

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Address _____

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Please enroll me for $25,000 of NEA Level Premium Term Life Insurance to age 50. This insurance decreases to $10,000 at age 50 and to $1,000 after age 70, and includes Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage.
I understand that my payments will be provided by NEA Members Insurance Trust for the first six months of coverage. My payments thereafter, which will never increase, will be made in the manner I have indicated below.

☐ Please charge my payments after the first six months to my:
☐ MasterCard® ☐ Visa® card

Acct. No. _____ Expires ____/____
Mo. Yr.

☐ Please have The Prudential bill me directly in the following manner:
☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ semi-annually ☐ annually

Please answer all questions:

1. SEX ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. DATE OF BIRTH ____/____/____
Month Day Year

*This form must be completed *only* by the NEA member applying for coverage. To be eligible, you must be an Active, Life, Reserve, Staff, Student or Substitute member in good standing.

3. PHONE ( ) _____

4. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. ___ — ___ — _____

5. BENEFICIARY
(Example: Mary A. Doe, sister, NOT Mrs. John Doe, sister)
NOTE: Your estate will be named if no beneficiary is designated.

Name _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Health Statements

1. I am now physically able to perform all the duties of my occupation, and I am working in full compliance with the terms of my contract. (This requirement not applicable to Student, Retired or Active members who have been involuntarily terminated by a school board as a result of a reduction in force.) ☐ True ☐ False**

2. During the last five years, I have never had, been treated for or been diagnosed by a doctor or other licensed practitioner as having any known condition of the heart or other circulatory disorder; cancer; tumor; diabetes; or immune system disorder or blood disorder (such as lupus, human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome [AIDS] or AIDS-related complex [ARC]). In addition, during the last five months I have not been confined in a hospital or other institution due to illness for more than five days. ☐ True ☐ False**

**A "False" answer does not necessarily mean you will not qualify. Coverage may still be available.

Exclusions

The Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage does not cover loss that occurs more than 90 days after an accident. (Time limitations are not applicable in Pennsylvania.) It does not cover any loss resulting from war (including undeclared war and armed aggression), suicide or attempted suicide, bodily or mental infirmity or disease, an infection other than a pyogenic infection of an accidental cut or wound, or travel on any aircraft aboard which you are giving or receiving training or have any duties.

The total payment for all losses due to any one accident will not be more than the amount of insurance in effect at the time of the accident.

Please sign so we can process your enrollment form.
I declare by signing below that all the information I have provided above is complete and true, and understand that it is the basis for providing insurance under a contract(s) issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America to the NEA Members Insurance Trust.

X _____
Member's Signature Date Signed

This insurance is underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: GRP 94188-ST-ED 1-93

Plan Code _____ I.D. # _____

Eff. Date _____ Ins. Am.: _____

Contract form 83500 COV 1004 TNM103

IDEA EXCHANGE

Drop Everything

My fifth graders enjoy an activity called Drop Everything and Write, a spinoff of the more familiar Drop Everything and Read. For five minutes every day, everyone in the classroom—including me—does nothing but write on one topic.

Before we write, I list the topic for the day on the board and lead the children in brainstorming the possible pros and cons. For example, if the topic is report cards, the pros might be that they're praise for good grades. Cons might be that they cause embarrassment over poor grades and comparison with siblings.

Then I remind the kids to stay seated, be quiet, and write their own opinion. I set the Drop Everything and Write timer for five minutes and place the DEAW sign on the door. On an empty desk by the door, I place pencils and paper so classroom visitors can join in the fun.

Betty Klein
Sheridan Road School
Lawton, Oklahoma

Dinosaurs in the Library

I'm a media specialist, always looking for creative ways to teach library skills to my elementary students. One successful method I've developed is based on the current dinosaur craze.

I tell the kids that Tassie the dinosaur—a distant cousin of Nessie, the Loch Ness Monster—is our card catalog. The youngsters repeat the first three letters of her name, T-A-S, to recall Title-

Author-Subject—the three ways that library materials are indexed.

Then I tell the kids that card catalogs, like dinosaurs, are becoming extinct. But even though computers are changing things, accessing books on-line will still require knowing title, author, and subject.

Kitty Cobb
Garden Hills Elementary School
Atlanta, Georgia

Latitudinal Seating

I teach my social studies students latitude and longitude by having them experience it first-hand.

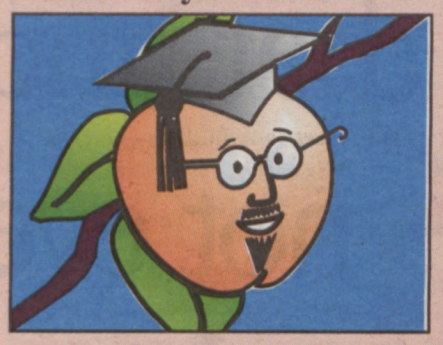
After explaining the basics, I devise a new seating plan, one divided into four equal quadrants. The desks in my classroom all face in the same direction. I label the rows to correspond with latitude (20 degrees, 40 degrees, 60 degrees) and longitude (15 degrees, 30 degrees, and 45 degrees).

Then I tape down two strips of brightly colored crepe paper to divide the quadrants. I properly site 0 degrees North and label it, and place other small signs indicating the latitude and longitude of the rows of desks.

The next day, as the students enter, I hand them each a slip of paper with a new seat assignment that they have to find by latitude and longitude.

Virginia R. Dugan
Seoul American High School
Seoul, Korea

A Scholarly Peach?



My seventh graders enjoy a fun grammar lesson during their art class.

First I review with the class the definition of nouns as the names of persons, places, or things. Then I write 20 or so nouns on slips of paper and put them into a box marked "Nouns."

Next I discuss how adjectives describe or limit nouns. The class comes up with their favorite adjectives, which I also write down and drop into a marked box.

The students take turns blindly selecting a slip from each box and then drawing the combination of words they've pulled out. The more humorous the combination, the more fun we have.

The kids love to illustrate a hairy banana or an angry houseplant, for example. If they select a combination that's too mundane, they pick again.

I display these wild and wonderful creations on my classroom walls.

Paula Guhin
Holgate Jr. High School
Aberdeen, South Dakota

Science for All

Looking for an exciting way to incorporate more science into the K-3 curriculum? Our high school physics students teach mini-lessons to primary students.

The high schoolers act as guest lecturers, bringing lab equipment with them to local classrooms for a week. A local bank pays for the supplies.

Now in its third year, the program's a wonderful, exciting learning experience.

Martina Norton
Vestavia Hills High School
Vestavia Hills, Alabama

Send your ideas to Idea Exchange, NEA Today, *1201 16th St., N.W., Washington DC 20036. Or use the newest electronic service, NEA Online. (see page 16). Include the name of your local Association and school, the subject or grade you teach, and your school and home phone numbers. Pictures are also welcome.*

TRENDS

Automation's Bite

Between 1990 and 2005, human services and computer fields will require more workers, but machines will keep taking people's jobs.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor market will go on shifting toward skilled and service occupations for the next dozen years.

Specifically, health services and child care are among the most rapidly growing fields; so are systems analysis and computer programming. Property rights will be well defended: prospective guards, lawyers, and auditors will have more chances of getting work.

Manufacturing work—assembling electronic goods, for example—will get scarcer. And U.S. families will be hiring fewer domestic workers and nannies.

Analysts predict fewer than 25 million new jobs will be created between 1990 and 2005—8 million less than between 1975 and 1990. That means college grads will be competing for jobs that high school graduates used to get.

'Slanguage' of the Times

Today's video-age youngsters seem to process information much faster than their predecessors. They turn off to lengthy speeches and long-winded explanations when a few buzz words or snappy phrases will do.

A teenage-marketing researcher, Irina Heirakuji, calls it the "sound-byting of data." A sampling of the snappy phrases and 'teenspeak' of the 1990s:

"How ya livin'?" (How are you?)

"Livin' large." (I'm doing well, thank you.)

"I'm Audi 5000." (Goodbye. I'm leaving.)

The "411" (translation: latest news and information) suggests that kids today, like kids in all generations, have carved out a snappy linguistic niche for themselves that sets them apart from their windier elders.

And, of course, advertisers are clued in to this new language and are lacing their commercials with teen slang, the better to impress teens and, of course, sell more products.

Punching In

U.S. elementary school teachers spend more time each week with their students than do their counterparts in 18 other industrialized countries, according to a report from the American Federation of Teachers. And with five-class days and five-day weeks, U.S., British, and Netherlands secondary teachers had the heaviest teaching loads.

Japanese and most European teachers, in contrast, have more time in the school day for planning than do their U.S. colleagues.

x + y = Better High School Math

Taking algebra seems to have an invigorating effect on eighth graders' math performance. On the 1990 NAEP math test, for example, eighth graders who were studying algebra scored nearly 20 percent higher than those taking regular eighth grade math.

No wonder the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recommends that schools start teaching every kid some algebraic concepts even before eighth grade.

In practice, though, just 13 percent of eighth graders study algebra, and another 10 percent are in accelerated programs. Less than a fourth of kids get these enriched math studies.

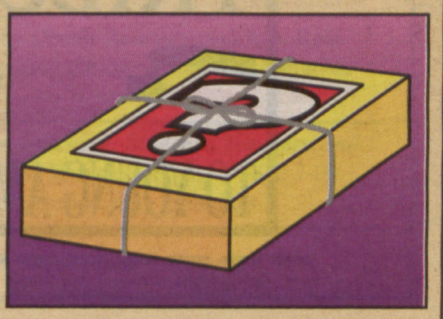
These facts come courtesy of a new report, *State Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education, 1993,* by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Health Ed Alternative

Some Missouri parents who are nervous about what goes on in school sex education classes can soon give their youngsters the same information at home. The St. Louis-area Parkway School District is offering parents an independent study packet from district health educators.

The packet is in response to a request by parents and a school board member for a total-abstinence alternative to the regular two-week sex ed unit.

Nationwide, producers of abstinence-only materials say their products are selling like hotcakes.



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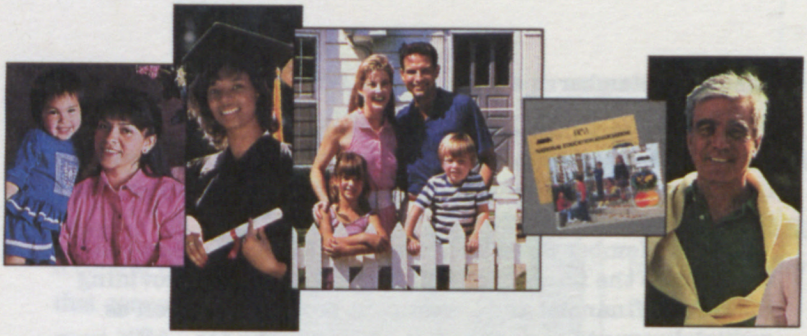

Your 1994 Guide to NEA Member Benefits

nea Member Benefits

28C

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NEA Member Benefits (formerly NEA Special Services) responds to the needs of the NEA membership by providing insurance, financial and investment programs, as well as special discounts and consumer education guides.

With the exceptional buying power of our membership, we are able to offer you important and affordable life insurance, homeowner's insurance, investment opportunities, retirement plans, loan programs, consumer discounts and credit cards—all tailored specifically to your needs, and meeting our high standards of quality, value and service. And only you as an NEA member can take advantage of these programs.

You also have the added assurance of knowing that our program providers have been carefully selected by the NEA, and that all programs carry the NEA endorsement.

Take a moment now to look through this guide and complete the attached information request form to receive further materials on your areas of interest. The information is free to NEA members; we've even paid the postage.

Keep your 1994 Guide to NEA Member Benefits handy throughout the coming year and refer to it whenever you have a question about, or a need for, any of these programs.

If you have additional questions, call the NEA Member Services Center toll free at **1-800-637-4636**.

Sincerely,

NEA Member Benefits

P.S. If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to call our representatives at **1-800-637-4636** to register your DUES-TAB beneficiary information. For more information on DUES-TAB, including eligibility, please see NEA Insurance Program Section.

From its inception in 1857, the NEA has been concerned with improving the lives of its members. Little has changed. Today, a central issue that concerns most NEA members is ensuring their economic well-being.

With its commitment to enhancing the lives of its members and its substantial group buying power, NEA Member Benefits provides quality products and services that address many of the needs of our members.

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NEA Member Benefits offers quality products in a competitive nationwide market with broad accessibility to the NEA membership. The program of Member Benefits is supported by superior service, a consumer education program designed to help members be better consumers of financial, investment, insurance, and other products, and by a process to resolve consumer concerns fairly.

NEA MEMBER BENEFITS TASK FORCE STATEMENT

NEA DUES-TAB Insurance

If You're Reading This, You May Already Be Covered
NEA DUES-TAB insurance protection is a guaranteed benefit provided at no cost to Active, Staff, Reserve and Life* members by NEA Members Insurance Trust. DUES-TAB insurance consists of life insurance and an accidental death and dismemberment benefit, and is underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

Special $50,000 Benefit
Plus, there's a $50,000 benefit for accidental death and dismemberment that occurs while on the job or serving as an Association leader. *No dues dollars are used to support NEA DUES-TAB.*

Call Today to Register Your Beneficiary Information
As an eligible NEA member, your coverage is automatic. However, if you haven't already done so, it is vital that you call **1-800-637-4636** to complete your Beneficiary Registration information.

To receive more information about your DUES-TAB insurance, call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636**.

*Life members must be actively employed in the field of education.

NEA Term Life Insurance

Your Colleagues Recommend It
In a recent survey, 95% of NEA members who have NEA Term Life Insurance rated the program as "Good to Excellent."*

Peace of Mind for You and Your Family
Thanks to NEA's decreasing term protection, you can now have enough coverage to help assure that everyone who depends on you—children, parents, other family members—will have enough to live more comfortably. There's protection available for every member and every lifestyle.

Affordable Group Rates, No Medical Exam
NEA's group rates are lower than any comparable coverage that an individual could buy on his or her own because of the combined buying power of our members. You can obtain anywhere from $10,000 to as much as $300,000 in affordable coverage, for which there is no medical exam required—you need only answer a few simple health questions. Underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

Call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636** for your FREE, informative "Peace of Mind" enrollment kit.

*Based on a 1992 NEA survey.

NEA
Level Premium Term Life Insurance

As a member in good standing of NEA, you may enroll for up to $25,000* worth of Level Premium Term Life Insurance coverage, depending on your age. Underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America and sponsored by NEA Members Insurance Trust.

The First 6 Months Are Free To You
Coverage is FREE to you for the first six months—courtesy of NEA Members Insurance Trust. Thereafter, payments may be conveniently billed to your credit card,** so you never have to bother writing a separate check or worry about missing a payment.

Your Payments Won't Go Up
The younger you are when you enroll, the lower your lifetime payment will be. (For members under 35, the rate is $4.30 a month). **These payments will never increase during the life of your coverage.*****

No Medical Exam
You need only answer a few simple health questions on the enrollment form. Just call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636** and request yours today.

*Coverage and rates are dependent upon the member's age.
**Credit card billing is currently not available to residents of AL, CT, DC, FL, HI, KS, MD, MS, NC, NH & OH.
***At age 70, $1,000 of coverage is available for $5.45 monthly.

NEA AD&D Insurance

Your Whole Family Can Be Covered 24 Hours a Day, 365 Days a Year for $19

For $19 a year, NEA AD&D Insurance can cover you and your family around the world and around the house.

This accidental death and dismemberment insurance protects you and your family with up to $30,000 in coverage when you are home or away—and up to $130,000 whenever you're traveling on public transportation.

You Can't Be Turned Down for This Important Insurance

As an NEA member, your acceptance is guaranteed—without a medical exam or answering any health questions.

Also, in each of the first five years of your coverage, the benefit for covered accidents on a public conveyance will increase $10,000 up to a maximum of $50,000, *in addition to the regular benefits.* Yet your premium never goes up! Underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

Don't delay. Call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636.**

NEA
Three-Way Home Protection Plan

Help Keep the Roof Over Your Family's Head
You deserve the special security of NEA's Three-Way Home Protection Plan—unique three-way protection of your mortgage payments against involuntary unemployment, total disability and loss of life.

Receive Up to $2,500 a Month*
The disability and involuntary unemployment benefits pay up to $2,500 a month—to you, not the bank. The decreasing term life insurance benefit pays up to $300,000* to your designated beneficiary, which can be used to help pay your mortgage. NEA's Three-Way Home Protection Plan features economical group rates, and is underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

For more information, call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636.**

*Amount will depend upon the information you provide. Exclusions and limitations apply to the disability and involuntary unemployment benefit. The life insurance benefit decreases annually.

NEA Guaranteed Issue Life Plan

NEA-Retired Members: You Can't be Turned Down
NEA Members Insurance Trust has developed a decreasing term life insurance plan specifically for NEA-Retired members 55 or over. As an NEA-Retired member, **you cannot be turned down for this coverage, and there's no medical exam.** Although the amount of coverage is dependent on your age, you can qualify for up to $10,000 of life insurance. Underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

For more information about this valuable plan, call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636.**

NEA MemberCare Supplemental Health Plans

In-Hospital Plan Covers Costs That Your Regular Health Insurance Doesn't. Excess Major Medical Plan Supplements Your Employer Plan and Covers Some Nursing Home Benefits.
NEA MemberCare offers a package of health insurance plans to supplement the basic health protection you receive through work or Medicare. You can also insure your spouse and dependent children at attractive group rates. These plans are administered by Seabury & Smith, Inc.

Call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636** for more information about MemberCare.

NEA Income Protection Plan

Don't Let a Disability Jeopardize Your Family's Well-Being
The NEA Income Protection Plan is designed especially to meet the needs of educational employees. The plan can provide up to 67% of your salary—usually tax-free and paid directly to you. Use the benefits for your mortgage or rent, utilities and other important expenses your salary would normally cover. Underwritten by the American Fidelity Assurance Company and Washington National Insurance Company.

Don't wait for a disabling illness or injury to threaten the financial well-being of your family. For more information, call NEA Member Benefits today at **1-800-637-4636**.

NEA Homeowners Insurance

Protect the Comforts of Home
NEA Homeowners Insurance offers you better protection at reasonable rates, plus many valuable extras—whether you own a house or condominium, or rent an apartment. Provided by Horace Mann, insuring America's Educational Community.

Call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636** for more information.

NEA Credit Card Program

Save Hundreds of Dollars a Year with an NEA Credit Card
The NEA School Days™ MasterCard® and Premier Gold MasterCard® cards are custom-tailored exclusively for NEA members. They offer flexibility, low annual percentage rates, and no annual fee the first year—possibly never!

One of the Best Credit Card Values in the Country
In addition to low annual percentage rates, NEA credit cards feature all the benefits you expect with a first-rate credit card: grace periods, payment holidays, travel benefits, access checks, insurance coverage, exemplary customer service and more. NEA Visa® cards are also available. These accounts are issued and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A.

To apply for your credit card right over the phone, call NEA Financial Services toll free at 1-800-468-7632.

NEA Line of Credit

It Looks Like a Check, But Acts Like a Credit Card
The NEA Line of Credit gives you up to $7,500 worth of credit and personalized checks to access it—anytime you need it. Plus, the *NEA Line of Credit costs you nothing until you use it.* Once you do, finance charges are low, and you have genuine payment flexibility.

No Annual Fee, Low APR, and It Costs Nothing Until You Use It
For times when you don't want to use a credit card, we think you'll find your NEA Line of Credit a sensible way to pay unexpected bills, take care of a home improvement project, pay tuition, make a once-in-a-lifetime purchase or *pay off those high-interest credit cards!** And you'll get the first-rate customer service you expect. This account is issued and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A.

Apply today by calling NEA Financial Services toll free at **1-800-468-7632.**

*Except to pay off or pay down another MBNA America Bank, N.A. account.

NEA Credit Plan

Fast and Easy Access to as much as $15,000 with no Collateral
Custom-tailored exclusively for NEA members, the NEA Credit Plan allows you to apply for an unsecured loan of $3,000 to $15,000 in cash on the strength of your signature. Use the money for any purpose—tuition, bill consolidation, or unforeseen emergencies. And, take up to six years to repay (depending on the amount of your loan).

You'll enjoy interest rates now starting as low as 12.9% APR, payment holidays, the privacy of applying in your own home, excellent customer service and other special benefits. The NEA Credit Plan is administered by Maryland National Bank.

To request more information, call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636.**

NEA Valuebuilder™ Tax-Deferred Annuity

Developed exclusively for NEA members by the NEA and Nationwide® Life Insurance Company, the NEA Valuebuilder™ Annuity Program's sole purpose is to help you build the kind of retirement nest egg you'll need later on.

Put More of Your Money to Work with Tax-Deferred Savings
With convenient monthly payroll deductions in the NEA Valuebuilder Program, you can realize two important advantages: potential faster growth of your retirement nest egg (because all taxes on your investment earnings are tax-deferred) and lower current income taxes (because your current taxable income is reduced by the full amount you invest, up to $9,500 a year).

The Sooner You Start, the More You Save
NEA Valuebuilder has a wide range of investment options, from conservative to aggressive strategies. Call NEA Member Benefits toll free at **1-800-637-4636** and let an NEA Valuebuilder Representative help you develop a personal retirement plan to meet your needs.

NEA GoldCertificate® CD

Higher Interest Rates and FDIC Safety
The NEA GoldCertificate® CD was created to give you the high interest rates you want, the flexible terms you need, and the safety that made you look to CDs in the first place.

Interest rates are higher than those of most major banking institutions and they beat the average rates available nationwide. This account is administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A., which consistently receives the highest possible rating—a three-star rating for safety—from VERIBANC, Inc., an independent bank-rating service.

Finally, the NEA GoldCertificate CD is FDIC-insured, up to $100,000 per depositor.

Get today's current rates and start saving now with as little as $1,000 by calling NEA Financial Services toll free at **1-800-348-4632**.

NEA
FDIC-Insured Money Market Account

Higher Rates, Safety and Access to Your Money
With the NEA FDIC-Insured Money Market Account, you can get to your money whenever you need it, without any penalty whatsoever. Starting with as little as $500, it's easy to take advantage of higher rates, and your money is FDIC-insured, up to $100,000 per depositor. The bank behind this account is MBNA America Bank, N.A., which offers outstanding customer service and consistently receives the highest possible rating—a three-star rating for safety—from VERIBANC, Inc., an independent bank-rating service.

Start making your money work harder—call NEA Financial Services at **1-800-348-4632** to get today's current rates or to open your account right over the phone.

NEA Car Rental Program

Get Nationwide Discounts on Hertz Rentals
Enjoy free unlimited mileage when you reserve your rental in advance at Hertz's low Leisure Rates. Take advantage of year-round savings including a special discount on minivans!

To receive your NEA/Hertz ID Card, call NEA Member Benefits at **1-800-637-4636.**

NEA Magazine Service

More than 350 Titles Available at up to 80% Off Regular Rates
NEA members save up to 80% on more than 350 magazines with guaranteed savings, satisfaction and service through the NEA Magazine Service. If you find a lower introductory rate, or are unhappy with your service or subscription, you'll receive a prompt refund.

For more information on how to start saving on your magazine subscriptions, call **1-800-637-4636** today!

NEA Member Benefits Consumer Guides

Written by experts in their fields, the NEA Consumer Education Guides provide unbiased information and advice on important issues facing us all, such as insurance, finance and technology. These insightful guides are free to NEA members and contain essential facts necessary for a complete understanding of the topic. NEA Member Benefits has produced these guides as a means of further educating NEA members and giving them a consumer's edge in what can be a confusing marketplace. For a list of available guides, please refer to the information request form.

NEA Member Services Center

Help is Only a Phone Call Away
NEA Member Benefits maintains a toll-free Member Services Center to help members with any questions or concerns they may have about Member Benefits programs.

Members find that having access to the Member Services Center is like having a double warranty—first from the company that provides an NEA Member Benefits program, and then from the NEA itself, which backs up the provider's warranty with added service and support.

We Received 140,000 Phone Calls from Members Last Year
Knowledgeable Member Services Representatives are there to help members. Call them at **1-800-637-4636** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays, EST, and see how they can help you.

I want to know more about these programs. Please send me information about the following:

NEA INSURANCE PROGRAMS

040 ☐ NEA DUES-TAB Insurance
010 ☐ NEA Term Life Insurance
935 ☐ NEA Level Premium Term Life Insurance*
012 ☐ NEA AD&D Insurance
750 ☐ NEA Three-Way Home Protection Plan*
050 ☐ NEA Guaranteed Issue Life Plan
016 ☐ NEA MemberCare Supplemental Health Plans
018, 025 ☐ NEA Income Protection Plan*
925 ☐ NEA Homeowners Insurance*

NEA FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

120 ☐ NEA Premier Gold MasterCard
121 ☐ NEA School Days MasterCard
051 ☐ NEA Line of Credit
015 ☐ NEA Credit Plan

NEA INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

886 ☐ NEA Valuebuilder Tax-Deferred Annuity*
751 ☐ NEA GoldCertificate CD
233 ☐ NEA FDIC-Insured Money Market Account

NEA DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

006 ☐ NEA Car Rental Program
036 ☐ NEA Magazine Service

NEA CONSUMER GUIDES

101 ☐ Homeowners Insurance
133 ☐ Tax-Deferred Annuities
035 ☐ Understanding Credit
743 ☐ Buying a Personal Computer

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Finally, a scholarship program that understands not every kid's achievements can be measured in grade points.

Nearly $800,000 in national and state scholarships. The Discover® Card Tribute Award℠ has been established to reward student achievement in areas beyond straight academics. You may nominate *any high school Junior* with a minimum GPA of 2.75 who also excels in 4 out of 5 of these areas: Special Talents, Leadership, Community Service, Unique Endeavors and Obstacles Overcome.

Unlike other scholarships, winners are not limited to a 4-year college or university program. Students use these awards to further their education and training beyond high school in pursuit of their future career goals.

But for this achievement, they'll need your help. Request your nomination package today. Deadline for entries is January 14, 1994.

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MEMBER NOVUS NETWORK

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Please send me a nomination package with complete details on the Discover® Card Tribute Award℠ Program.

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School/Organization _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ ( ) Daytime Phone

Mail completed request form to: Discover Card Tribute Award,
American Association of School Administrators,
P.O. Box 9338, Arlington, VA 22219

AASA LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

BOOK BEAT

High School: 'A Strange And Frightening Place'

A St. Petersburg, Florida, reporter scrutinizes the American high school through the lives of five students.

South of Heaven: Welcome to High School at the End of the Twentieth Century
By Thomas French
Doubleday. 384 pp. $22.95.

Reporters and writers can't leave the American high school alone. They keep coming back, immersing themselves in this unique—often bizarre—institution for an entire school year so that the next year they can capture it authentically in print.

This latest effort, Thomas French's *South of Heaven,* is one of the best.

A reporter in St. Petersburg, Florida, French spent the 1989-90 school year at nearby Largo High School. His aim: to report on the end-of-century generation, the kids he calls the "children of the post-Watergate wasteland, where presidents are expected to lie and fathers are expected to leave and the television is always switched on."

During his research year, French interviewed, observed, even participated (by going on a toga scavenger hunt, for instance) in the lives of scores of students, including the five whose experiences give shape to his story. He got permission to quote from all his subjects and their parents.

Three of the featured students—John, who's Black and a football player; Andrea, Black, and Homecoming Queen; and "YY", white and an academic star—succeed in making high school a useful step toward adulthood. But for the other two (both white), high school has no impact. Jaimee, " the ghost, "cuts class and avoids adults; Mike cuts, too, but treats adults with angry obscenities.

The most interesting and life-affirming contribution of this book may be French's observation that the Mikes and Jaimees quit learning not because of mistakes the school is making but "because others have quit before them. They're caught," French writes, "in all sorts of self-destructive patterns established by their friends, their older brothers or sisters, their parents, the entire society. Not just patterns of dropping out. Patterns of anger, addiction, abuse, rejection."

"They don't understand," French continues, "that any school, any business where they'll ever work, has its petty rules and smothering qualities. It's hard for them to accept that high school offers something worth their time."

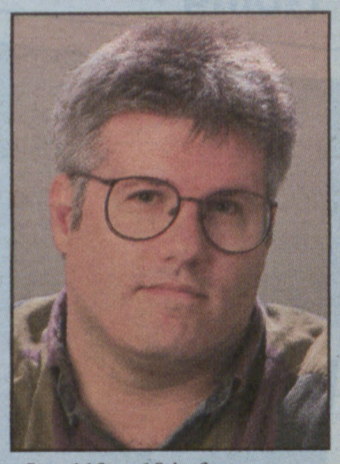
So the withdrawers burn their bridges to the future, while the academicaly talented "YY" (her real nickname) and her pals work out their hostilities by throwing darts at the principal's photograph in the privacy of the newspaper office.

"YY" and her friends have the long-range vision," French explains. "They laugh and make fun, but they stay, because they know that eventually staying will be rewarded."

French says Largo High is a "nice school, a good school." He's impressed with the teachers (see sidebar) and the principal. But he knows that Largo High—and virtually every other high school—hasn't yet figured out how to reach the kids with inbred bad habits.

—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor

High School:
How the Author Got Inside



In a recent telephone interview, St. Petersburg Times *reporter and* South of Heaven *author Tom French discussed the openness of Largo High School students and faculty.*

Did the faculty want you to do the series?
Yes. The principal passed out pieces of paper with "Y" or "N" written on them, and the teachers voted during their unassigned periods. I had made a presentation to them, but I didn't know how they were going to react. Surprisingly the vote was something like 115 to 5 or 110 to 10 in favor.

Why do you think they were in favor?
What was key is that educators feel so besieged that they're desperate for people to know what it's like. This is a nice school, a good school. But things that are happening are very disturbing and the teachers feel a lack of support.

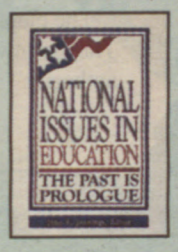
Do you have a formula for school reform?
When people ask me what's wrong with our schools, my instinct is to hand them a mirror. Every strength, every shortcoming, is merely a reflection of what exists outside school.

The single biggest need for change is in what parents are doing —not what teachers and schools are doing. There are really good committed teachers in that school and every other school I cover. I'm always startled by the number of good teachers I meet on stories.

How did the kids let you have such intimate looks at their lives?
I was honest. I told them exactly what I wanted to do. They were remarkable people—very courageous. Everyone's life is extraordinary.

N.R.N.

And Keep In Mind. . .



Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition. Merriam-Webster. 1559 pp. $21.95 (thumb-indexed).

The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition. 2140 pp. $21.95.

The battle of words heats up this year with the introduction of two new editions of popular desk dictionaries—both updated with the latest "acceptable words."

National Issues in Education, The Past Is Prologue. ***John F. Jennings, Editor.*** **262 pp. $15 plus $3 p&h.** (Phi Delta Kappa, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789, 800/766-1156.)

Jack Jennings, general counsel for education, with the House Committee on Education and Labor, documents the post-Reagan Administration era shift back to an active federal role in education. Bush Administration officials and Congressional leaders have authored pieces on school reform, postsecondary education, education research, and education funding.

The NEA Professional Library's Top Ten

NEA Bestsellers

Current Rank	
1	***Countdown to the First Day of School,*** by Leo M. Schell and Paul Burden. (#2150-9-00-FB, $4.95) A must-have checklist for new teachers.
2	***At-Risk, Low Achieving Students in the Classroom,*** by Judy Brown Lehr and Hazel Wiggins Harris. (#3338-8-00-FB, $9.95) No miracles, but this book covers over 100 practical ideas for improvement.
3	***Student Team Learning: A Practical Guide to Cooperative Learning. Third Edition,*** by Robert E. Slavin. (#1845-1-00-FB, $18.95) A down-to-earth approach to effective cooperative learning from the leading expert.
4	***The Ten Commandments For Teaching: A Teacher's View,*** by Ray Reyes. (#1539-8-00-FB, $8.95) A high school teacher reminds you of why you went into teaching.
5	***Learning Styles,*** by Judith C. Reiff. (#1092-2-00-FB, $3.95) What research says to the teacher about creating a positive learning classroom.
6	***Empowering At-Risk Families During the Early Childhood Years,*** by Kevin J. Swick and Stephen B. Graves. (#0366-7-00-FB, $16.95) New strategies to help children and parents.
7	***Student Portfolios.*** (#2901-1-00-FB, $9.95) Insights from your colleagues in the first of the new Teacher-to-Teacher series.
8	***Educator's Job Search: The Ultimate Guide to Finding Positions in Education,*** by Martin Kimeldorf. (#1860-5-00-FB, $15.95) A better way to land your dream job in education.
9	***Geography Across the Curriculum,*** by Dennis Reinhartz and Judy Reinhartz. (#3070-2-00-FB, $10.95) Integrating the curriculum for geographic literacy.
10	***Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning: Students, Teachers, and Administrators,*** by Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle. (#1842-7-00-FB, $11.95) Dynamic ways to build change-inducing groupings.

To order any NEA Bestseller title listed here or get more information, call 800/229-4200.

People

Going to the Chapel...er, Bus

Last April NEA members **Melissa Kiley** and **Erik Rohlik** got married on a brand new Blue Bird school bus, which was parked next to the junior high school's rose garden. The roses were in full bloom.

This happened in Marana, Arizona, where Melissa is a school bus driver; Erik, a bus mechanic. They met two years ago when Melissa recruited Erik into membership in the Marana Classified Education Association. During the ceremony the newlyweds suspended standard rules of bus decorum. The minister *stood in the stepwell*, the bride and groom *stood forward of the line*. Both the groom and the minister *spoke to the driver. A radio was played*—and the bride failed to *watch her step* , falling (luckily without harm) off the emergency ladder she used to enter the bus. Twenty-five guests filled the students' seats.

The couple was pleased with the omnibus setting. "I work on buses for a living," Erik says; "and I drive them," Melissa adds. "We plan to stay with them until we retire."

Staying on Track

Chris Rohlfing collects "all the trains kids dream about."

A history teacher at Blackhawk Middle School in Bensenville, Illinois, Rohlfing has amassed one of the largest toy train collections in the Chicago area, covering over 2,000 feet of shelf space—and nearly taking over the Rohlfing basement.

Rohlfing collects for pleasure, not profit. "I collect what I like, so each train has its own story," he says. "Some people have sold to me because they wanted someone to appreciate the train they got for Christmas decades earlier. It makes the collection special."

With a track in their house, Rohlfing, his wife, and two sons can operate up to five trains at once—and do, frequently. "It's an important part of family life," Rohlfing says.

Activists in the Train Collectors Association, Rohlfing and his wife ran the group's national convention in Chicago two years ago. Recently, Rohlfing's collection was featured in *Classic Toy Trains* magazine.

The magazine notes that Rohlfing is a "pre-war specialist" and editor of *Greenburg's Guide to Lionel Trains, 1901-1942*.

Classic Toy Trains magazine

Elephant Expert

When fourth-grade teacher **Lilmar Taylor-Williams** walks the halls of Mount Vernon (Virginia) Community School, kids often whisper, "There goes the elephant lady."

Taylor-Williams doesn't mind a bit. In fact, she's proud of it.

For the past five years, Taylor-Williams has been an elephant expert at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., volunteering her time to help zoo visitors get to know the four African and Asian elephants—Ambika, Nancy, Shanthi, and Toni—who live there.

"It's my job to help people understand these wonderful animals," explains Taylor-Williams, who spends one to two days a month at the zoo. "I tell them how to tell the difference between the African and Asian elephant (one secret: their ears are shaped like the continent they're from). I talk about their habits, their communities."

The elephants, Taylor-Williams laughs, are "just like kids in a classroom. They're always testing you, and you have to immediately establish your authority."

Carolyn Salisbury

Gone Fishing—Back in Time

Photoplant

Using machetes to dig and sickles to clear the brush, Hawaiian teacher **Al Barcarse** and his seventh and eighth grade students have built a house from waiawi logs and pili grass, an underground watering system from a natural spring, and a Hale Kuahu shrine encircling an ancient guardian stone.

The nearly finished product is a fully functional, full-scale replica of a 17th-century Hawaiian fishing village—right next to King Intermediate School, facing Kenohoe Bay in Oahu.

The project started two years ago when Barcarse got approval from the school district and the principal to build the village on what was formerly a one-acre lot covered with weeds.

Since then, teacher and students have spent many hours after class and on vacations constructing the project with ancient tools and methods. A traditional hula field that the group also built has already been used for a statewide hula competition.

Barcarse initiated the project to give King's students of Hawaiian ancestry—40 percent of the school's population—something visible to be proud of. The village is both an example of their traditional civilization and testimony to their personal capabilities.

Constructing the village has become a labor of love for the students. They often host kids from nearby elementary schools, teaching them native games while giving them the grand tour.

Funding has come primarily from Barcarse himself, although there have been donations of plants and other items—mostly from other teachers.

Several teachers at King incorporate various parts of the village into their curriculums. Barcarse hopes that eventually the village will become an education research center.

"Traditionally, young people learn about their history secondhand," says Barcarse. "This village goes beyond that—it lets them actually experience their heritage and, at the same time, provides a showcase they can share with others."

Getting It Together: The Art, The Math...

Fred Moore

"I'm a right-brained random thinker," says Connecticut art teacher **Patricia Keegan** (coincidentally, right), "and Cheryl's left-brained analytical. I think globally, she works with details. My art students are panic-stricken about higher level math, and her math students feel that way about art."

But Keegan and colleague **Cheryl Boyhen** at Shepaug Valley School are united by an interest in collaborative learning and in the intricate geometric art of Martin Escher.

Working with their differences and their similarities, Keegan and Boyhen have created a unit that brings their classes together for three weeks to study Irish art, Islamic art, American quilt patterns—and transformational geometry.

"The math students and the art students both were expert and both were inexperienced, and we told them that," says Keegan. "When they think they're important, they're willing to share, and that means they're willing to learn."

Students started out trying to pose their teachers, identically dressed, as reflections of each other. They looked for examples of reflections (and, eventually, transformations and other forms) in ads and around the community.

The unit seized the imagination of the small northwestern Connecticut town. Parents started learning along with their children. At a school board meeting, Keegan and Boyhen demonstrated their ideas by getting board members to form reflections of each other.

"People often think geometry isn't part of 'real' life," notes Boyhen. "They often think art isn't, either. In this unit, students see geometry isn't all in textbooks and art isn't all in museums." This year, Boyhen and Keegan are adding music to the unit and don't believe the expansion will stop there.

The unit may be coming soon to a classroom near you. With the help of a Hilda Maehling grant from NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Keegan and Boyhen are creating a packet of curriculum materials and a workshop for teachers.

"Just bouncing ideas off each other, getting feedback with recognition, is important," notes Keegan. "Isolation can get you really frustrated."

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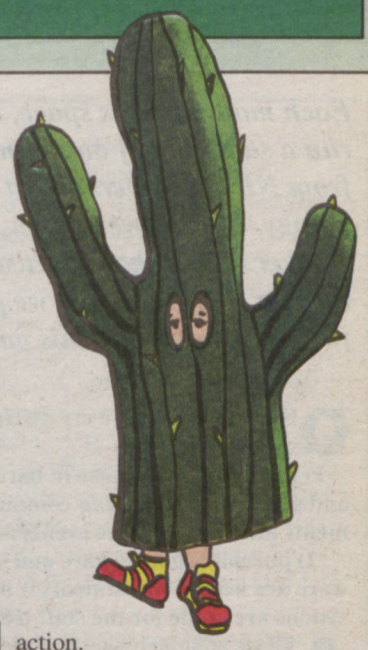


Join in this month, when Audubon All Species Day gives students "a chance to combine their enthusiasm for masquerading with their love of wildlife."

By Pearl Lawson and Michelle Dimas

Children are among the most energetic and outspoken environmentalists. They instinctively understand the importance of a healthy planet where animals, plants, and people can all live together in harmony.

Three years ago we created Project: Planet Earth (PPE) in response to students' desire to further their ecological understanding, and to help them take constructive action for the environment.

This year our PPE Club is part of a larger environmental education project of the National Audubon Society, in which children across America will be speaking out for nature.

This month, just before Halloween, Audubon All Species Day will offer students a chance to combine their enthusiasm for masquerading with their love of wildlife.

The concept is simple. Have students study an endangered species, its habitat, and the threats facing its survival, and help students translate their knowledge into skits, plays, parades and other costume-based events.

All Species Day is a valuable alternative to traditional Halloween celebrations. It also offers a chance for students to educate others in both their school and community.

The fourth, fifth and sixth graders in our PPE Club have already experienced the fun of species costuming. Audubon selected them to create a pilot play for the curriculum package the Society has developed for All Species Day.

Our school had already "adopted" the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse as part of the California Endangered Species Education Program (a cooperative venture of the California Department of Education, the California Department of Fish and Game and the National Audubon Society).

Because of the program, students in the PPE Club already had a good understanding of the local wetlands ecosystem where the endangered mouse lives. Creating a habitat play was a fun way to reinforce their knowledge.

The students worked in committees for a few weeks to produce the script, costumes, props, and scenery. They wrote the script from their experience visiting the wetlands and from classroom lessons on the interconnections of wetlands life.

They made their costumes with the help of a mask-making book, construction paper, some old clothing, and a little paint. The props were made by reusing cardboard and found objects.

Working after school and one Saturday—when a volunteer artist came to help—the students showed true commitment to a worthwhile production.

They presented the play to more than 250 schoolmates. We stood in the audience feeling proud of the students' accomplishment. As usual, they far exceeded our expectations, and taught us a thing or two. The simple skit conveyed a strong, meaningful message: "Wetlands are Worth Saving!"

The students' efforts confirmed for us the philosophy upon which we founded Project: Planet Earth—

➤ Students should be given an opportunity and a safe place to learn and express concerns about the environment.

➤ As teachers, we can help students discover strategies for prioritizing and problem solving in areas of concern to them.

➤ We can help students find and acquire appropriate resources and contacts for further knowledge and taking action.

➤ We can support students as they make decisions and take action.

Audubon All Species Day is only one of the many ways to tap into children's natural interest and curiosity about their world. However, it is a unique opportunity for them to apply what they've learned.

Audubon is also sponsoring a national All Species Day contest to recognize students'—and teachers'—efforts to communicate endangered species awareness to their schools and communities. Any classroom can enter.

All Species Day is Saturday, October 30. Special events will take place nationwide. Major events will occur in Los Angeles, St. Louis and Washington, D.C.

Audubon has produced a limited number of All Species Day curriculum packages targeted at upper elementary students. Send a $10 check or money order (includes postage and handling) to Audubon All Species Day, 666 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Washington, DC 20003.

Mike Spinelli

Pearl Lawson is a fifth grade teacher at William Burnett Elementary School.

Michelle Dimas is a science specialist. Both work for the Milpitas, California, Unified School District.

ASK DR. HACKER

Each month in this space, we'll run a sampling of questions from NEA members about technology. The answers from Dr. Hacker reflect the expertise of the two NEA members we profile at the bottom of this page.

Q How do I convince my district/school that

1) investment/purchase in hardware and software are *ongoing* commitments and not one-time events and;

2) purchasing hardware and software are wasted investments if no provisions are made for the staff training?

A Those are tough questions. It's especially difficult to convince people to do things when they can't see how to do them.

People are used to doing things the same old way. It's true for all of us.

Look for ways to break out of existing patterns.

Help your administrators by showing them how they can accomplish your objective. There's a chance they'll see that your objective is also theirs.

Of course, money's the usual problem. There are so many demands and so few resources. One possibility for freeing up money for technology is to take a fresh look at the school budget.

Are some trade-offs possible? For instance, could certain less crucial purchases be postponed to free up some money for technology?

Q What does it take to make school adminstrators, elected officials, and others understand that an investment in telephones, computers, and educators is an investment in the future of our students?

A Focus your proposals on curriculum objectives and what you plan to accomplish with your students, not on the equipment you need. Technology is only a part of any plan. A computer is only a machine, a word processor only a tool. What you're going to do with it is the important ingredient.

Administrators and fiscal folks need to know that they are making a good investment in students and their learning.

Greg Jenson

Q How can I use NEA Online to benefit my students and to "plug-in" to colleagues for their suggestions and support?

A You've already started by using NEA Online. NEA Online provides an excellent way to connect with colleagues across the country. A lot of good ideas never leave the classroom. We can all gain from leaving the four walls and sharing our successes with other teachers or asking for help with a problem.

Once you sign into NEA Online, click the Teaching & Learning icon. From the screen you'll see, you can access the Teaching & Learning Message Board.

On this message board, you'll find NEA member-initiated dialogues on a wide variety of classroom issues.

You can respond to a dialogue already begun or start your own dialogue. You can post a question that will be seen—and responded to—by your colleagues all across the country.

Also check the NEA Online Meeting Place area. On this area you'll find information about upcoming "online" discussions on various topics.

Q I have 30 students but only one computer. What do I do?

A If you can, and your computer is compatible, get a wide-screen monitor. The monitor can enlarge the screen images. You can also use a cable-connector hooked to two wide-screen monitors. Finally, use computer programs that are interactive. That way the entire class can get involved in problem-solving activities.

Q Are computers really valuable in developing students' critical thinking skills?

A Yes, if they're used with the right programs—ones that promote higher order thinking skills rather than "drill-and-kill" programs that merely feed students questions and answers.

Q How does technology translate into hands-on learning?

A Different technology can be adapted to study different things. For example in a lesson on mountain ranges, you could show mountain erosion on the laserdisc, examine a series of sand samples using a microscope magnified onto a monitor, then use a computer graphing program to map the data. Kids are visual learners, so they respond to these tools.

***If you have questions for Dr. Hacker on any topic—from NEA Online to desktop publishing—write Dr. Hacker at NEA Center, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or use NEA Online. Just keyword* NEA Today.**

For details about getting on NEA Online, subscription costs, and more, please see page 16 of this issue.

Hats Off To:

Moundsville, West Virginia, computer instructor and NEA member Bill Burrall, was named National Teacher of the Year for *Technology and Learning Magazine* and IBM. Burrall's into a lot of exciting education projects using computer technology, but one in particular stands out.

Burrall's junior high computer literacy students used electronic mail to communicate with inmates at a maximum security prison nearby. Then Burrall added a national, and then, an international dimension to the project, linking his students and the inmates with students in a tiny Alaska school, another group of middle school kids in Cleveland, and schools in Bermuda, England, Canada, and the Netherlands.

Burrall's students focused on prisons and inmate rehabilitation, but classes from other schools centered on gangs, guns, AIDS, and other topics.

Though the communications were anonymous, Burrall says the messages were candid and personal. Burrall's work is a good example of using technology to enhance communication and understanding among kids in very different situations.

Update: NEA Online and Rural Members

For the majority of NEA members, access to NEA Online, the Association's new national electronic network, is only a local phone call away. But for some NEA members, dialing into NEA Online requires a toll call. Why? Here's the situation.

Hundreds of telephone "nodes" located around the United States now connect NEA Online subscribers by phone line to America Online, the national network on which NEA Online resides. Most of these nodes are located in urban or suburban areas. These nodes are accessed by local phone lines. It's estimated that about 90 percent of the American population lives in metropolitan areas covered by these nodes.

Many NEA members in rural areas may not have local access to the nodes that link AOL to individual customers. In addition, if you live in Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, or any other site outside the 48 contiguous states, you must currently pay a 20-cents-a-minute surcharge to access NEA Online.

NEA is developing an "Action Kit" for NEA members who live in rural areas that require a long distance call to access NEA Online. The kit discusses the problems and proposes specific actions to be taken to solve the problem of affordable access to data communications.

In the long run, NEA believes that INTERNET, the international computer network with about 15 million subscribers, may be the answer to affordable access to data communications systems. The "Action Kit" materials will help rural NEA members develop a strategy in each state to make INTERNET accessible to the education community and, especially, to those far from large population centers that already have commercial services available.

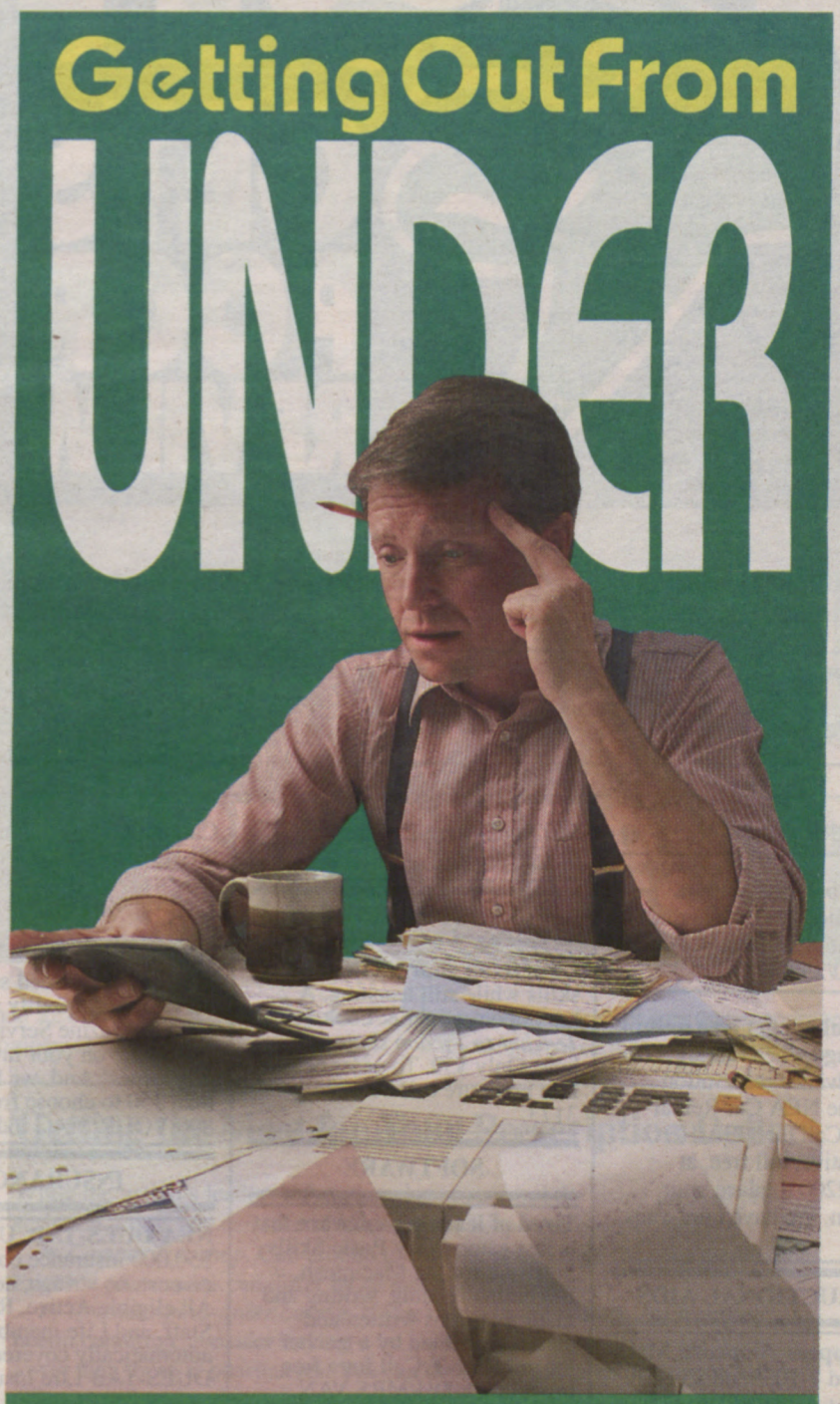
Elementary science teacher Lyn Chan is project coordinator for TOPS (Technology Optimizes Performance in Science) at Skyline Elementary School in South San Francisco, California.

Chan was named a Christa McAuliffe Educator in 1988 by NEA's nonprofit foundation, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

Keith Zook is the technology coordinator for the Grosse Ile Township, Michigan schools. A veteran of over 30 years in the classroom, Zook has a special interest these days in using technology to help in school restructuring. He is a member of two statewide committees that bring together school administrators, business, and other groups interested in addressing technology issues.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Getting Out From UNDER



Forget the national debt. How much do you owe? Financial writer Mary Rowland looks at ways to minimize the red ink - and the stress that often comes with it.

No one wants to be in debt, but sometimes it's hard to avoid. If you find yourself in a financial pickle, you might try these strategies:

➤ *Get a credit card with a lower interest rate.*

Government statistics show that consumer credit is continuing to shrink as Americans pay down the debt load they amassed in the 1980s. And there is new evidence that consumers are shopping hard for credit cards with the best rate.

It's worth the effort, too. As the prime interest rate falls, theoretically, so should the annual percentage rates on credit cards. But the average APR on a credit card is still up around 18 percent.

Most consumers could save a considerable amount of money by cutting up credit cards with interest rates of 18 percent or more and consolidating consumer debts on a credit card with a lower rate.

➤ *Cash in on your home equity.*

If you're a careful spender, you may be able to save even more by consolidating your debt on a home equity credit line or a home equity loan.

With a home equity loan, you arrange to borrow a specific lump sum, which should be just enough to pay off your other debts.

Once you've made the loan, you begin to pay it back. "You get only that one amount," says Keith Gumbinger, a spokesman at HSH Associates, a research group in Butler, New Jersey, that collects mortgage market data.

These loans, available from banks and credit unions, carry rates in the 7.5 to 9 percent range, according to Gumbinger.

Better yet, the interest you pay on a home equity loan or line up to $100,000 in principal is deductible for tax purposes. If you're in the 31 percent tax bracket, and you pay, say, $500 interest on a home equity loan, the after-tax cost to you is $345.

"It's one of the easiest ways to consolidate," says Gumbinger. "And it's also one of the least expensive because of the tax deduction."

Whether it's a good idea, though, depends on what kind of person you are. If you truly can't control your spending, moving your credit card balances to a home equity line can be very risky. With this type of loan, your home is collateral. Inability to pay means losing your home.

If you feel that you'll have trouble controlling your spending, one option is to take out a home equity loan as opposed to a credit line.

Either way, you should promise yourself to work at paying off the debt you have transferred to your home equity loan and not incur more debt.

"Just maintain one or two credit cards and pay them off every 30 days," advises Donald Badders, president of the National Foundation for Consumer Credit.

If you don't discipline yourself to do that, you'll have just increased rather than reorganized your debt."

➤ *Try talking with your creditors yourself.*

For one reason or another, many consumers need more help than a low-rate card or a home equity loan can give them. In some cases, a long stretch of unemployment, illness in the family or—for many educational employees—a summer with no pay check paints a family into a corner where they feel they just can't get a handle on their debt.

A rule of thumb: you have too much debt if you owe more than 20 percent of your monthly take-home pay to consumer debt, excluding your mortgage. If you're in this situation, you might try to contact your creditors and try to renegotiate to lower payments.

➤ *Get help from professionals.*

If you feel you need some help in budgeting and reorganizing debt, it's available at little or no cost at one of the offices of the Consumer Credit Counseling Service (800/388-2227).

The services cost from nothing to $42 a month, says Ken Scott, a spokesman for the group. In a third of the cases, no fee is charged. In those cases where consumers pay, the fee averages $9 a month.

Counselors can simply take a look at your cash flow and debt load and help you straighten it out. Or they can, in extreme cases, recommend that you get legal help.

In about a third of the cases, counselors recommend "debt management," where the counselor calls your creditors, tells them you're having a problem with your debts, and arranges a repayment program. Generally, the payments are lowered and stretched over a longer period of time, says NFCC President George Badders.

Often the creditors will lower the interest rate or eliminate the finance charges. In this scenario, you send your monthly payments to the counselor who distributes them to creditors.

The Counseling Service then requests what is called a "donation" of 7 to 15 percent of the money from the creditors. This is the source of most of the Service's revenue, Badders says.

Most people who use the Service get back on their feet financially. "A lot of people can repay the debt they owe over a period of 3 or 3 1/2 years and avoid going into bankruptcy," says Consumer Credit Counseling Service's Ken Scott.

Staying out of debt sometimes requires modifying your behavior so you can control your spending. "People who budget and plan to save are better off physically, emotionally, and financially than those who go from pay day to pay day," says George Badders.

You Know You're in Trouble When...

Donald Badders, president of the National Foundation for Consumer Credit, says you're in trouble if you answer yes to two or more of the questions below:

➤ Is your savings cushion inadequate or nonexistent?

➤ Are you using credit cards for items you used to buy with cash?

➤ Are you at or nearing the limit on your credit cards?

➤ Is an increasing percentage of your monthly income paying off debts?

➤ Are you only able to make the minimum payments on your revolving credit cards?

➤ If you lost your job, would you be in immediate financial difficulty?

Too many yeses? Badders suggests calling the Consumer Credit Counseling Service for help, 800/388-2227.

Help from NEA

For those who don't own their own homes or prefer not to consolidate their debts through a home equity loan or line of credit, help is still available.

The NEA Credit Plan, provided by NEA Member Benefits, offers unsecured signature loans from $3,000 to $15,000, with repayment plans of up to six years. The annual percentage rate, depending on the loan amount, ranges from 15.9 percent for lower amounts to 12.9 percent for higher amounts.

In addition, members can consolidate consumer debt by transferring higher interest credit card balances to the NEA Credit Card. The NEA card offers a variable rate, currently 13.6 percent, or a fixed rate of 14.9 percent.

For more information on these or other NEA Financial Services, call NEA Member Benefits at 800/637-4636.

RESEARCH CLUES

Adolescence and junior high aren't exactly made for each other. In fact, a new research report from University of Michigan psychologists concludes that the "mismatch" contributes to and exacerbates the negative behaviors adolescents are often known for.

What is it about junior high that rubs adolescents the wrong way? Research published in *American Psychologist* magazine last February suggests that junior highs, when compared to elementary schools, offer:

➤ Fewer opportunities for student decision making, choice, and self-management at a time when students want more freedom.

➤ Less personal and positive teacher-student relationships at a time when students "are in special need of close relationships with adults outside of their homes."

➤ Less of an emphasis on higher level thinking skills "at a time when cognitive development would suggest the need for more complex academic tasks."

➤ Tougher grades, more public evaluations, and more whole-group instruction at a time when adolescents have a "heightened concern about their status in relation to their peers."

Large schools, large teaching loads, and departmentalized teaching are all part of the problem, researchers note, since they make it difficult for teachers to approach students as individuals.

Add it up, and you get a "climate that undermines both teacher and student motivation."

The answer: make junior highs or middle schools more suited to the "developmental needs" of their students.

These conclusions are based on interviews with some 1,500 students from 12 school districts over two years.

Who Runs the Schools?

Not teachers, say one-third of teachers interviewed by the U.S. Office of Education Research and Improvement. They claim teachers don't have much influence over key decisions.

For starters: only 35 percent of elementary and secondary teachers surveyed believed they had considerable influence over establishing curriculum or setting discipline policy. Only 31 percent believed they were consulted extensively over the content of in-service programs. Only 28 percent believed they were influential in deciding ability groups.

Overall, elementary teachers reported far more influence in these areas than secondary teachers, except in the area of setting curriculum.

When asked about classroom issues, teachers reported significant influence.

More than half of those surveyed believed they had considerable control over the selection of textbooks, and content, topics, and skills to be taught. These and other findings were based on six surveys conducted during the 1987-88 school year. The full report, *America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession,* was published in May.

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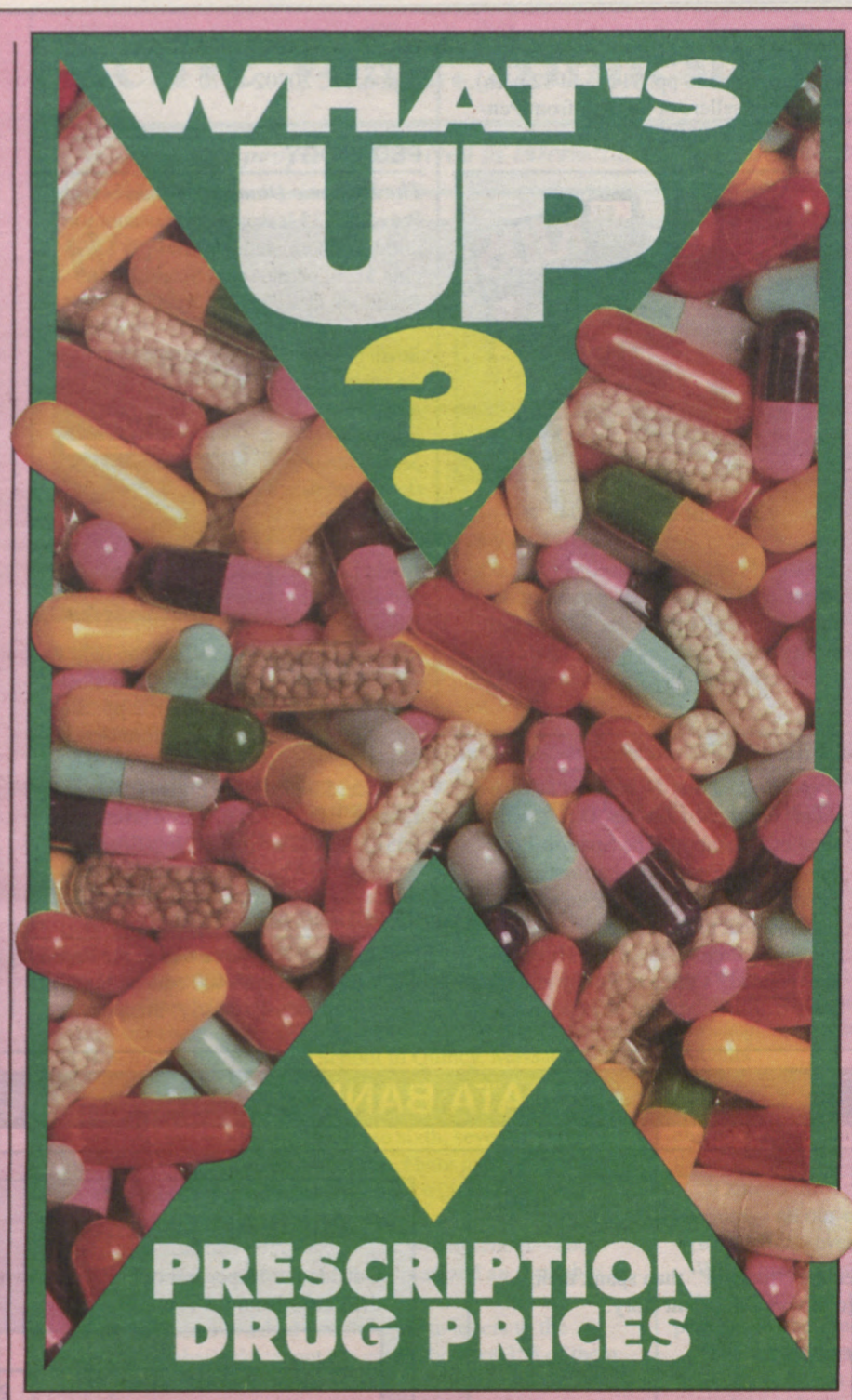
To place an Education Marketplace advertisement...Just send in your notice, with appropriate payment, to Education Marketplace at the address below. Rates: Educational Products/Services and Academic Employment Opportunities Categories: $115 per line. Display ads–$895 per column inch, 5-inch maximum. Consumer Products/Services, Summer Employment, and Business Opportunities Categories: $130 per line. Display ads–$1155 per column inch, 5-inch maximum. Deduct 10% if you're an NEA member. Please count 30 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation). Contact NEA TODAY Education Marketplace, 1201 16th St., N.W. Washington, DC 20036; 202/822-7207.

LOOKING AHEAD TO RETIREMENT

WHAT'S UP?



PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

The high cost of prescription medicine has become a central issue in the debate over how best to reform the nation's health care system.

During the 1980s, just when general inflation began to ease, the prices of many prescription drugs skyrocketed—many rising at triple the rate of inflation over the past decade.

Consumers are often socked with rising costs, since insurers are much less likely to cover drugs than hospital care or doctors' services.

Between 1985 and 1990, the price of Premarin, a drug used for estrogen replacement, more than doubled. So did the cost of Tylenol with codeine and the blood pressure drug Lopressor. The price of the anti-seizure drug Dilantin actually quadrupled.

Ceredase, a drug for treating a rare enzyme deficiency called Gaucher's disease, now costs an average of $140,000 a year. Tissue plasminogen activator, a generically engineered drug for treating heart attacks, costs $2,200 a dose.

Older Americans have been hit especially hard by soaring drug prices. People over age 65 fill an average of 15 prescriptions a year to treat chronic health conditions—triple the number filled by those under age 65.

Medicare, the federal health insurance program for those age 65 and older, doesn't cover outpatient prescription drugs. Medicaid, the federal-state health plan for the poor, covers only about one of six older adults.

Most people over age 65 don't have insurance coverage for drugs unless they're hospital patients. Yet these same people are prone to have chronic health problems that they need to treat with prescription medication, explains Susan Polniaszek of the United Seniors Health Cooperative, a non-profit consumer group.

"Very few Medigap policies cover prescription drugs," Polniaszek says. "If seniors do have coverage, it's usually limited and very expensive. As a result, many seniors have to choose between paying the rent or buying medicine."

"Sometimes they take a drug once a day when they should take it four times a day. Other times they wait until their Social Security check comes in to buy a drug, or they go without their medication altogether."

Over the past year, the pharmaceutical industry has been the target of harsh criticism from policymakers, insurers, and consumers.

One consumer group, Families USA Foundation, in the often-cited report "Prescription Costs: America's Other Drug Crisis," reveals that prices of the 20 top-selling drugs rose 82 percent between 1985 and 1991, nearly four times the rate of inflation.

In another report, the congressional Office of Technology Assessment charges that drug firms' profits are more than $2 billion annually, and that the companies spend huge sums of money on marketing campaigns that encourage doctors to prescribe expensive medications.

How has the pharmaceutical industry responded to the barrage of criticism? The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PMA) offers a three-part defense.

First, they say that the cost of discovering and developing pharmaceuticals has risen dramatically. It takes an average of 12 years and an investment of $231 million to develop a new drug, according to a study by the Tufts University Center for the Study of Drug Development.

Second, drug price increases are gradually slowing down. Drug prices rose less than six percent in 1992, says PMA. That's down from an increase of nearly 10 percent in 1991. Nine major drug companies—controlling nearly 40 percent of the prescription market—have pledged to keep price hikes within the general rate of inflation.

Third, prescription drugs are the most cost-effective treatment for many conditions. Pharmaceuticals often reduce reliance on more expensive treatments, such as surgery, and eliminate the need for costly hospital stays and nursing home care.

The cost of prescription drugs is one of the main targets of health care reformers. This past spring, President Clinton called the price of prescription drugs "shocking" and accused vaccine makers of pocketing "profits at the expense of our children."

Hillary Rodham Clinton, head of the President's Task Force on National Health Care Reform, recently told a meeting of the American Medical Association: "We will try...to include prescription drugs in the comprehensive benefit package for all Americans, including those over [age] 65 through Medicare."

Within the task force, opinions vary as to how to control rising drug prices. Some officials favor federal regulation, while others claim that regulation could destroy incentives for drug research. One compromise being considered is establishment of a drug price review board to set guidelines for drug prices.

Within Congress, the drug industry's harshest critic is Senator David Pryor (D-Arkansas), chair of the Senate Special Committee on Aging.

Last year, Pryor introduced legislation that would have eliminated certain tax breaks for drug companies whose prices rise faster than the inflation rate—a proposal endorsed by President Clinton. The bill was defeated, but the Senator has vowed to try again.

"America needs a strong, vibrant drug industry," wrote Pryor in a *New York Times* editorial earlier this year. "But Americans can no longer stand for 'business as usual' when it comes to the drug makers."

Getting the Most for Your Prescription Dollar

While the nation's leaders debate how best to control the rising price of prescription drugs, you can take several steps to keep your costs down.

➤ *Comparison shop.* Call around to find the price range for your medication. Prices at pharmacies can differ by as much as 25 percent.

➤ *Consider mail-order buying.* If you take a drug regularly for a chronic health condition, consider buying it by mail. Prices by mail-order are much lower than those at pharmacies. You can do so by joining an organization that offers a mail-order plan or by purchasing directly from a vendor.

➤ *Buy generic drugs.* On average, generics cost half as much as brand name drugs and, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), they're just as safe and effective. Ask your doctor for a prescription allowing for generic substitution.

➤ *Ask for free samples.* Physicians often get drug samples. If your medication needs are small, your doctor may be willing to give you some.

➤ *Buy in quantity.* If you take a drug regularly, ask your doctor to prescribe it in large quantities. The per pill cost for 100 pills is often less than that of 25 pills. But remember, drugs deteriorate over time.

➤ *Ask for a senior discount.*

➤ *Choose an insurance plan that covers prescription drugs.*

➤ *Don't be pressured into buying drugs from your doctor.* This may save time, but it can be more costly. Compare doctors' prices with pharmacy prices.

A variety of member benefits are available to NEA-R members through NEA-Retired and NEA's Member Benefits Corporation. For more information, call 800/637-4636.

RESOURCES

Free Or Inexpensive

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Challenged Americans. Quartet Manufacturing Co. Set of 14 full-color 15 1/2" x 11 1/2" posters of Americans—including former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, Senators Robert Dole and Robert Kerrey, and actress Marlee Matlin—who have overcome challenging disabilities to lead productive lives before the public. $14 plus p&h. To order, phone Quartet at 800/421-4246.

COUNSELING

They Can, But They Don't: Helping Students Overcome Work Inhibition. Jerome H. Bruns. A counselor explains how to deal with the 20 percent of elementary students who have difficulty finishing their assignments. 228 pp. $11 (add $2 p&h). From booksellers or by mail from Penguin Books at 800/253-6476.

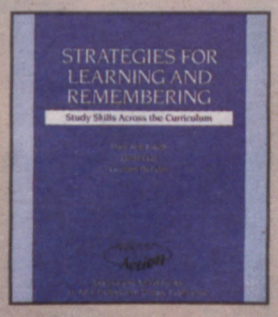
Careers Without College: Kids. (Maura Curless and Linda Peterson). Two volumes in Peterson's new series of books on careers kids can pursue straight out of high school. 104 pp. each. $7.95 each. From booksellers or Peterson's (add $4.25 p&h for the first book) at 800/338-3282.

PARENT RELATIONS

Preparando a Sus Hijos para la Universidad: Guia para Padres. U.S. Department of Education. The Spanish-language version of the Department of Education's resource book on academic and financial preparation for college. 53 pp. Free. "Preparando a Sus Hijos para la Universidad," Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Rm. 3127, Washington, DC 20202-8170.

PEDAGOGY

The Dynamic Dinosaur. Adele Siegel. Provides 135 lessons on dinosaurs for middle-school students. 104 pp. $8.95 plus $1.50 p&h. Adele Siegel, 11169 Braddock Dr., Culver City, CA 90230.



Strategies for Learning and Remembering: Study Skills Across the Curriculum. Mary Ann Rafoth, Linda Leal, and Leonard Defabo. Outlines teaching strategies that can help K-12 students develop crucial study skills in major curriculum areas. 152 pp. Stock no. 3048-6-00-FF. Order before Nov. 15 to get the special price of $10.95. Regular price, $14.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06515, 800/229-4200. FAX 203/933-5276.

TEACHING MATERIALS

Smithsonian Resource Guide for Teachers. Lists more than 400 educational items—including (mostly) inexpensive slides, posters, booklets, audio- and videotapes—published by the Smithsonian Institution museums, the National Gallery of Art, and other Washington, D.C.-based organizations. 1993-94 ed. 84 pp. 1-9 copies, free; 10 or more copies, $2 each. Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Arts and Industries Building, Rm. 1163, MRC 402, Washington, DC 20560, FAX 202/357-2116.

READING

Books for Children. 1992 edition. Library of Congress. Lists a variety of titles from the year's publishing output that are likely to stimulate children's imaginations. S/N 030-001-00138-5. 24 pp. $1. Send check to Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402-9325, or order by VISA or Master Card at 202/783-3238.

"Free or Inexpensive" feature items listed are selected by the editors at their discretion from review copies submitted by publishers.

If you meant to order one of the "Free or Inexpensive" items from a past issue, and no longer have your copy of* NEA Today, *don't worry.

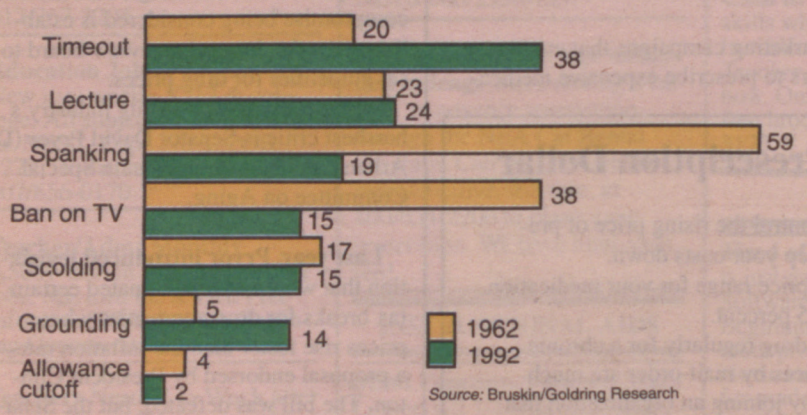
You can still find your item through NEA Online, NEA's newest electronic communication network. Just key word* NEA Today. *For more about NEA Online, see page 16.

DATA BANK

The Spared Rod

This generation's parents would rather declare "timeout" than spank their children who misbehave. Thirty years ago, it was a different story.

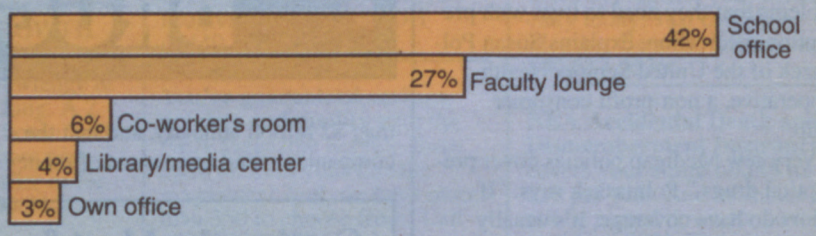
Methods of discipline favored by parents



Source: Bruskin/Goldring Research

Calling All Teachers

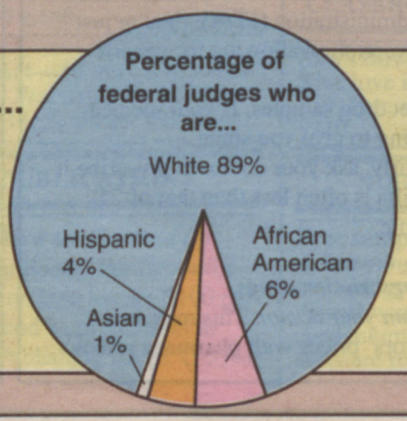
Outside the 12 percent of classrooms with phones, teachers most often make their calls from the . . .



Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates study done for the NEA

Here Comes the Judge...

...And the odds are running nearly 7 to 1 that he's male. As for ethnicity...

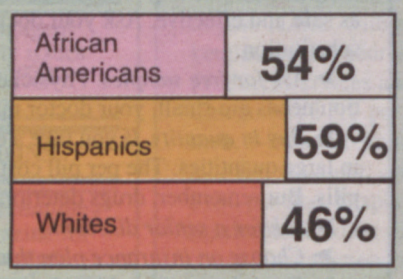


Source: Administrative Office of U.S. Courts, Alliance for Justice

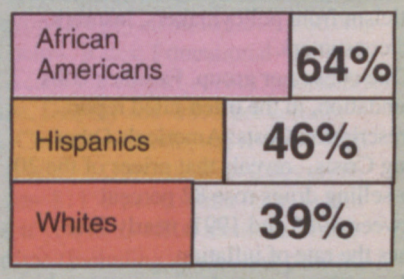
Who Cares About Schools?

Hispanics are the most likely to believe public school funding is inadequate. African Americans have most faith the public schools will get better.

Percentage who think public school funding is inadequate



Percentage who say public schools will improve in 5 years



Source: National PTA/Newsweek Poll

INTERNATIONAL

RIGHTS WATCH

Ethiopia

The 120,000-member Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) is locked in confrontation with the country's transitional government, which assumed power in 1991.

Since that time, support for the transitional government has eroded for several reasons.

For its part, ETA opposes the government's call for the reorganization of unions from a national to a regional basis and for conducting education in four regional dialects rather than the national language, Amharic.

As tensions have increased, union officials have been arrested and removed from office. Government-backed competing unions have taken over the offices, property, and treasuries of the ETA and its branch offices.

As a part of the new ethnicity policies of the transitional government, about 20,000 qualified teachers have been dismissed and replaced by unqualified individuals.

The Education International and NEA are working to resolve the dispute between ETA and the transitional government. They're seeking the reinstatement of all education and union employees and the redress of other grievances.

What You Can Do

Plan a school or community program on human rights or human rights education. You can arrange for speakers or in-service workshops through Amnesty International-USA. Contact its National Office (322 8th Ave., New York, NY 10001, 212/807-8400) to find the regional office in your area.

Amnesty International Classroom Resources

➤ *Human Rights Education: The Fourth R.* Each issue focuses on a theme—for example, refugees, women, children's rights. Includes background, resources, and classroom activities. Secondary, $2.

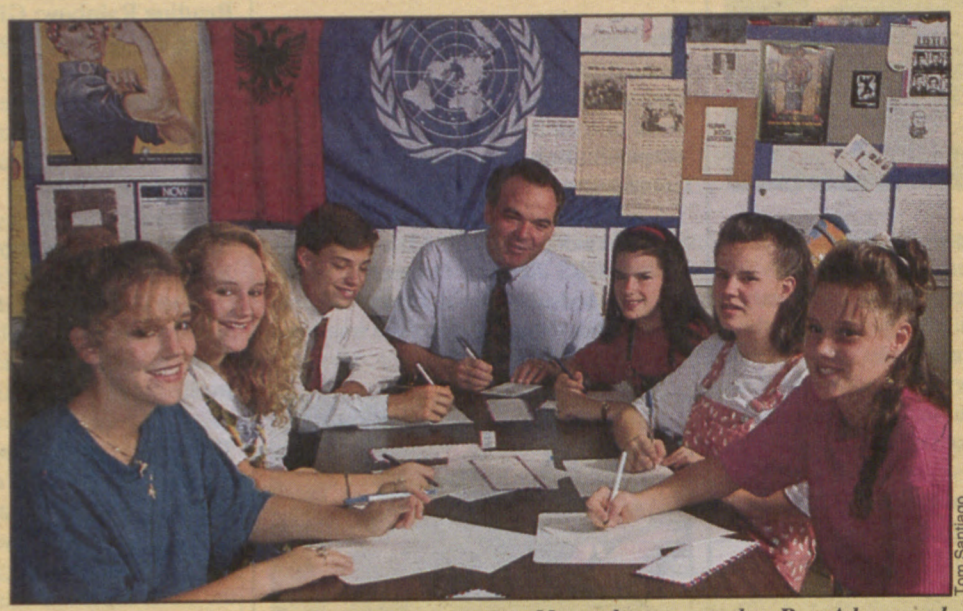
➤ *Human Rights Education Bibliography.* Includes manuals for educators and primary and secondary level publications. Each entry has a paragraph describing its content. Free.

To obtain the above resources or ask about the education program, contact the AIUSA Midwest Regional Office, 53 W. Jackson, Suite 1162, Chicago, IL 60604, 312/427-2060.

➤ *Children's Urgent Action.* Simply-written, large-print bulletin describing cases of special interest to children, suitable for letter-writing campaigns. Monthly free. AIUSA Urgent Action Office, P.O. Box 1270, Nederland, CO 80466, 303/440-0913.

Active Voice: Amnesty International

When young people get involved in international issues, "anything can happen."



Tom Santiago

By organizing a massive letter-writing campaign, Massachusetts teacher Ron Adams and his middle school students were able to help free an 18-year-old political prisoner in the former Yugoslavia.

When Ron Adams' middle school students saw a photo of an 18-year-old high school student being held as a political prisoner, they wanted to know more.

With four other young people, the 18-year-old student in what was then southern Yugoslavia had been sentenced to four years in prison for circulating a petition for bilingual education. The teens spoke Albanian, but school was taught only in Serbo-Croatian, the official national language.

The picture, along with many others, was part of a regular mailing from Amnesty International USA to activists and educators around the world. Adams, a language arts teacher at Broad Meadows Middle School in Quincy, Massachusetts, got the mailing—and the bug to get his students involved.

"Amnesty's school program usually works with older students," Adams explains. "But these sixth, seventh, and eighth graders have a serious side to them. There just aren't many opportunities for them to get involved with international movements."

Adams' students got to work. The whole school—about 320 sixth through eighth graders—organized an assembly about the case.

Adams' students asked people to write letters to the Yugoslav ambassador about the case. They got 358 of them, nearly all the students in the school.

When Boston's CBS-TV affiliate heard about the case and invited students to talk about it on the air, the station got another 3,200 letters.

"Senator Kerry's office started calling the Yugoslav Embassy talking about school kids concerned about the right to education," Adams recalls. "Since our letters hadn't gotten any response, two of the eighth grade girls and I flew to Washington to try to see the Yugoslav ambassador.

"First we had an appointment with Senator Kerry at the Capitol. He came running down the steps to meet us; we could tell he had good news. He hadn't been able to get us an appointment—but the girl had been released that morning."

The youngsters went on to the embassy anyway. There they spoke with an aide. Then they returned home to work alongside their classmates, mobilizing 44 members of the Massachusetts legislature to press for release of the other four students.

"When young people get involved with Amnesty," says Adams, "anything can happen. It was Amnesty's resources and encouragement that gave me the confidence to take on these serious issues with my kids in my classroom.

"It spread throughout the building to other issues. Now we encourage all our students to take an action—for example, to write a letter—every time they see an abuse."

When kids are writing for a purpose, Adams asserts, they produce their best writing—"their most passionate, their most persuasive, their most convincing.

"The textbook now is the world," Adams says, "and Amnesty provides a chapter every month."

And the price is right, too. For about $50 a year, Adams' class gets urgent action alerts every month, while he gets an educators newsletter with all sorts of ideas for school and community groups.

—Jane Power

Understanding Who's Who On the International Scene

The Paris-based Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) exerts a strong influence on public policy in the United States, the world's other industrialized nations, and far beyond. Two dozen countries, from Australia to Turkey, belong and pay close attention to OECD's analyses and advice.

The United States, one of the founders of the 33-year-old body, takes part in its deliberations, helps pay for its operations, and staffs the U.S. Mission to the OECD.

OECD's activities have far-reaching effects on people in member countries—and through them in almost every country worldwide. Yet few people anywhere, outside of governments or agencies with a special interest in OECD activities, are really aware of what OECD does.

Of special interest to NEA and the Education International (EI), are OECD activities that affect education and labor. The OECD's Education Committee is made up of the member nations' Ministers or Secretaries of Education.

Often consensus positions on education policy are developed. Soon afterward, governments and other bodies discuss the same theories or strategies throughout the industrialized world.

It's no accident that education employees in different nations find themselves confronting the same issues.

While only governments can be members, OECD has established a mechanism for formal consultation with other groups. Its Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), with which the EI is associated, sometimes meets with the OECD secretariat or committees. That's its chance to present some analysis and viewpoints of its own before OECD publishes recommendations or studies on a given topic.

Because of OECD's substantial influence on public policy in many countries, the EI's consultative relationship with it is an important way to monitor and influence the development of policies that affect education worldwide.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

National Geographic Explorer: Mt. Everest—*TBS, October 10, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Fifty years after Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first to make the treacherous climb to the top, this anniversary show takes a look at the forbidding mountain (photo above) and the people who dare to climb it.

Nick News Special Edition: It's Only Television—*Nickelodeon, Wednesday, October 13, 5:30-5:55 a.m. ET.* This special program teaches kids how to watch TV—in other words, how to distinguish both fantasy and television from reality.

Afterschool Special: Surviving a Breakup—*ABC, Thursday, October 14, 4-5 p.m. ET.* This special, hosted by Oprah Winfrey, looks at the ways people respond when relationships end. A group of celebrities share their experiences.

The Stuff of Dreams—*PBS, Tuesdays, October 19, October 26, and November 2, 10 p.m. ET.* This series features inventors and researchers who are creating new materials that revolutionize the way people live.

The Heart of Healing—*TBS, October 26-27, 10:05-12:05 a.m. ET.* This six-hour series uses stories from around the world to examine the most potent weapon in the war against illness—the human mind.

Schoolbreak Special: If I Die Before I Wake—*CBS, Tuesday, October 26, 4-5 p.m. ET.* A young man struggles with his beliefs after the members of his track team die in a plane crash.

Spirits of the Rainforest—*The Discovery Channel, October 26, 8-10 p.m. ET.* This program takes a look at one of the world's most spectacular rainforests, Peru's Manchu Biosphere Reserve (photo above).

Nick News Special Edition: We are the Weird—*Nickelodeon, Wednesday, October 27, 5:30-5:55 a.m. ET.* This program looks at diversity and dispels the myths that cause stereotyping.

Reading Rainbow: Gila Monsters Meet You at the Airport—*PBS, Wednesday, October 27, 4-4:30 p.m. ET.* A young boy's fantasies about life "out west" leads to an investigation of the Arizona desert and the life and habits of the Gila monster.

Assignment Discovery: Childhood: A Journey—*Discovery Channel, Friday, October 29, 9-10 p.m. ET.* This documentary examines the harsh living conditions children experience around the world.

The Great Depression—*PBS, check local listings for dates and times.* Using rare, archival film footage and first-person interviews, this seven-part documentary series takes an unparalleled look at the worst economic crisis in America's history.

I Am a Promise: The Children of M. Hall Stanton—*HBO, October, check local listings for dates, times.* This moving film chronicles a struggling inner-city elementary school in Philadelphia where 90 percent of the students live below the poverty line (photo above right).

Lifestories: Dead Drunk: The Kevin Tunell Story—*HBO, October, check local listings for dates, times.* The true story of a teenager who kills a young woman while driving drunk.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, DC.

Teacher TV

Don't forget to tune in to *Teacher TV*, the weekly magazine-style program coproduced by NEA and The Learning Channel. *Teacher TV* airs Sunday evenings, 6-6:30 p.m. ET. Here's a list of upcoming topics:

October 17: Alternative Assessment
October 24: Time
October 31: Authentic Materials
November 7: Effective Discipline
November 14: Restructured Schools: A Thorough Look.

A New Journal for K-12 Teachers

Here's a sparkling blend of restructuring research and classroom practice served with a twist: the writers are K-12 teachers. ***Teaching and Change***, co-published by the NEA Professional Library and Corwin Press, is a quarterly journal that offers an exciting and vital forum for reporting the experiences of classroom teachers as they learn how schools must change to make good, reflective practice possible and pervasive.

Charter subscriptions are still available

The regular rate for a one-year individual subscription is $30.00. **NEA members save 10% and pay only $27.00.** Subscribe now to receive the Fall 1993 premiere issue hot off the presses!

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Your NEA

Q & A

Duly Delegated

How can I become a delegate to NEA's Representative Assembly?
RA delegates are elected at both the state and local level. Each state is allocated one delegate for every 1,000 members, and each local is accorded one delegate for every 150 members. NEA encourages state affiliates to cluster local affiliates with fewer than 75 members to elect delegates.

How many delegates usually attend the RA?
Although, the ratios result in the election of about 10,000 delegates each year, in general some 8,500 delegates attend an RA. There were 9,043 delegates at last year's RA in San Francisco. The 1994 RA will be held in New Orleans.

How does NEA ensure that ethnic minorities are represented?
NEA achieves ethnic-minority representation at least equal to the proportion of identified ethnic minority populations within each state.

Each December, every state affiliate is required to submit to the NEA Executive Committee for its approval a legally permissible plan that's designed to achieve a total state and local delegation to that year's RA, reflecting its ethnic-minority percentages.

What power do RA delegates have?
The RA exercises "final authority in all matters of the Association," according to the NEA Constitution.

These matters include: adopting the annual budget; establishing dues; electing the president, vice-president, and secretary treasurer; amending the Constitution and the Bylaws; adopting the rules and agenda governing its meetings; and enacting such other measures, not in conflict with the Charter, the Constitution, or Bylaws, as may be necessary to achieve NEA's goals and objectives.

How are RA decisions made?
The RA is the largest parliamentary decision-making body in the world. RA decisions are made democratically; in most cases, delegates vote by saying "yea" or "nay". Elections, amendments to governance documents, and some additional items are handled by secret ballot.

Robert's Rules of Order prevail during the four days of plenary sessions as amendments, resolutions, new business items, and other matters are discussed and voted on.

If the outcome of a voice vote isn't discernible, a standing vote is taken. If the outcome of that vote isn't clear, a roll-call may be called for.

SPEAKING OUT ON THE ISSUES

NEA Lobbies Via Grassroots

Mention NEA's clout on Capitol Hill and you hear three words: powerful grassroots organization.

NEA's advocacy in the nation's capital depends not just on staff lobbyists, but on some 1,200 NEA members—members of NEA's Congressional Contact Team, who lobby their Representatives and Senators in their spare time.

The CCT program was initiated in 1976 to provide a means for Association members in every Congressional District to lobby Congress on federal legislative issues affecting education. Through these many individual contacts, the Association gains support for its legislative agenda.

Both organized and individual activities are a part of the CCT effort. Each year some 200 CCT members come to NEA Center in Washington, D. C. where they're briefed by NEA Government Relations staff before scheduling an appointment to meet one-on-one with their legislators. At set times, CCT members fan out on Capital Hill to let their Senators and Representatives hear their views on a wide range of issues.

In addition, CCT members visit their member of Congress during spring recess when the legislator is back in his or her home district.

"Between meetings we encourage our members to maintain regular contact with their member of congress via letter, telephone, fax, or telegram," says NEA Government Relations staffer Gary Timmons.

Timmons says that for lobbyists, timing is key. That's why having a grassroots network of Association members prepared to correspond with their legislators at a moment's notice is so important. "A flurry of postcards targeted to key members of Congress is part of doing business in Washington," he says.

IN HISTORY

In 1976, NEA took its first steps into presidential politics, working to elect the Carter-Mondale team as well as other friends of education.

After the election, NEA officers and lobbyists met almost daily with Washington decision makers, explaining the Association's goals and the legislative program designed to meet them.

President Carter's budget reflected NEA's influence as well, providing nearly $1.5 billion over the Ford Administration budget for public education programs in fiscal 1978.

"NEA is encouraged by the emphasis placed on schools and children in President Carter's federal education budget message," announced NEA President John Ryor at the time.

WORKING FOR YOU

NEA Bolsters International Efforts

NEA has always played a role in responding to the needs of children and educators internationally. NEA's potential to influence world events grew dramatically last January when NEA joined more than 240 other educator unions to create the 20-million-member Education International.

Keeping track of worldwide events affecting education and coordinating NEA's international efforts fall to three full-time staff who work in the International Relations office at NEA Center.

Jack De Mars (right), JoAnn Eide, and Marie Viegas are quick to respond when members ask why NEA is involved in international matters.

"We can't close our eyes to world events and to our colleagues around the world who are trying to teach the world's children," says De Mars.

NEA's involvement in international issues intensified in 1945 when then-NEA Executive Director William Carr played a major role in founding the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to help rebuild schools destroyed in the war. From 1952 to this winter when Education International was founded, NEA's international work was centered in the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP) which NEA helped found.

SHORT TAKES

SMOKE-FREE CLASS OF 2000

Anti-Tobacco Campaign. The Smoke-Free Class of 2000 is in the sixth grade now and they're learning to "Know the facts—keep your power" when it comes to handling pressure to use tobacco. The NEA-backed program, which utilizes videos, activities, and discussions, is a 12-year education and awareness campaign of the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association to meet former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's challenge to create a smoke-free generation by the year 2000. Educators agree that sixth graders face increased peer pressure and enticements from tobacco advertisers to experiment with tobacco. An activity kit for teachers is available for $7. Teachers can call KO-CIGGS (800/562-4447) for more information and to place orders for the kit....**Uniserv Training.** As part of an ongoing commitment to state and local affiliates, the NEA is seeking eligible candidates for the eighth Affirmative Action Uniserv Intern Program for Ethnic Minorities and Women, which will begin July 10, 1994. Individuals who successfully complete the 4 1/2 week training program and the three-month field experience will be certified by the NEA as eligible for UniServ staff work in an NEA state or local affiliate. Up to 15 candidates will be selected for the program. All letters of interest must be received at the NEA (attention: Delores Edwards Rozier) by December 15, 1993. Deadline for applications is January 29, 1994. No faxes please...**Eyecare ABCs.** The Better Vision Institute (BVI), a nonprofit public education organization, has been working to educate parents and teachers about how they can identify children's vision problems by observing certain behavior through it's "ABCs of Eyecare" program (Annual Back-to-school Check-ups). Free resource guides for teachers are available. For more information, contact the Better Vision Institute, P.O. Box 77097, Washington, DC 20013, or call 800/424-8422.

The ABCs of eyecare

Letters

More About Time

I thought your "It's About Time!" (Cover story, September) would give some tips on how to manage one's time for less stress and more satisfaction. Imagine my surprise when I found out that some members were advocating 12-month contracts for teachers. Horrors!

Bill Brindamour is 100 percent correct when he says that all districts would impose more work upon teachers with, at most, a nominal pay increase. In my opinion, no amount of additional salary would compensate for the loss of my cherished summer freedom.

Let's face it—if the district is paying for your time, they're going to make demands on that time. Mandatory summer classes, meetings, and conferences could disrupt teachers' summer plans. Some may offer "voluntary" 12-month contracts, but you can be sure that all kinds of pressure would be exercised to get people to "volunteer."

Lengthening the school year is a poor idea. Kids need time to relax, rejuvenate, play, be kids, and have fun. Teachers also need their summers free to relax, travel, pursue hobbies and other interests, reconnect with friends, and be involved in creative endeavors. Adults need to have fun and freedom, too.

Let's be honest—in a profession which too often is on the receiving end of bureaucratic nonsense, has extreme responsibility with accompanying stress, and is a great deal of work for rather low pay, summers off are one of the biggest pluses.

I get really tired of well-intentioned but misguided people who are all too willing to undercut the rights and freedoms that teachers have fought hard to win. Let's nip this dangerous and counterproductive idea in the bud.

My suggestion to those who want a 12-month contract: get a life and quit offering to trade in my time, which I value much more than money, for a salary increase.

Andrew Walker
Laguna Beach, California

As the author of the New Business Item that created the Task Force to study time resources issues, I wish to commend NEA for the excellent article "It's About Time." Further, I believe the task force members are to be congratulated for their couragous recommendations—including the 12-month contract year.

While I share Bill Brindamour's concerns regarding imposed extended contracts without matching compensation, I believe we must assert the need to address students' learning needs as they relate to time and the public schools. In addition, Teaching will never be viewed as a true profession as long as the public continues to view the three best reasons for teaching as June, July, and August.

Thanks for putting this issue before our members. I wish the NEA Board luck in its future deliberations. We've no time to lose.

Jim Fotter, president
Wyoming Education Association

I have a 38-week contract and generally work 10 hour days during every one of those 38 weeks. My friends in the nursing profession have a 3-day/12-hour week. My friends in legal offices work a 4-day/10-hour week. The prostitutes in Nevada brothels work two weeks on and two weeks off.

This is my reply to the people in our community who complain about the easy job teachers have. I tell them that I work a 5-day/50-hour week for 38 weeks and deserve a holiday just as much as nurses deserve their 4-day weekends, the legal staff their 3-day weekends and the whores their two weeks.

In reality, we do need reforms. I'm tired of 50-hour weeks. By March, I'm ready for June.

But if your writers actually believe a 12-month contract will result in an eight-hour day for teachers, it's time to visit the Mustang Ranch and learn from some real professionals.

Christy Strange
Virginia City, Nevada

I was very dismayed when I began reading the article "It's About Time" to read once again that teaching is a 9-month job. From my standpoint, it's a 10-month job, starting in early September and ending in late June.

To continue referring to the teacher's year as nine months long is wrong and confusing to most people. Please pass the word around that teachers are actively working the classroom for 10 months of the year.

Donna Delgado
Laconia, New Hampshire

Check the Pictures

Please, a little more discrimination in your choice of pictures. I refer to the picture of the three men of Highland School on page 22 (People, September).

As a former Industrial Arts teacher, I'm disturbed by the fact that two of the men aren't wearing eye protection while using a power tool. The third man is wearing what appear to be normal dress glasses, not approved safety glasses.

Role models are extremely important. If we don't model safe practices, how can we expect students to do so? I would further suggest that the men check state industrial safety regulations.

James G. Schulz
Bellevue, Washington

Whose Pay Is It?

Is the intention of your September State Side feature —"Teacher Pay Up 3.6 % in Past Year— to make teachers feel better about their salaries? Or is it to give the impression that our pay is adequate?

In the same issue that discusses 12-month working years, yearly renewable contracts, and the need for teachers to work harder at organizing the basic aspects of the educational system, you state that California teachers had an overall 3% salary increase in the past year.

That's interesting. Who were the lucky recipients? Did you take into account that teachers in Los Angeles Unified, the largest district, had a 10% cut in salary?

As one of these, imagine my surprise at seeing your figures, not to mention my enthusiasm for plans that would enable my apparently immoral and incompetent employers to dismiss me at the end of each year, regardless of my worth—doubtless to rehire me for a cheaper rate the following year.

To work 12 months instead of 9 under such cirumstances hardly seems appropriate.

Teachers need to be involved in planning, decision making, and restructuring but I, for one, am tired of being expected to bear the brunt of this country's unwillingness to provide funds or show real concern for its educational system.

Mike Dewing
Los Angeles, California

'Bigger Isn't Better'

For years, I've wondered if more than a handful of NEA members have given serious thought to reducing the huge number of delegates to our annual Representative Assembly (Your NEA, September).

In Washington, D.C., two summers ago, NEA had about 8,600 delegates representing 2.1 million members—a ratio of one delegate for every 247 members. By comparison, one delegate to the AFL-CIO convention represents about 17,500 members. In the U.S. Congress, each member of the House represents about 460,000 citizens.

At a recent NEA convention in Kansas City, I attempted to change our bylaws to restrict the number of delegates to 7,500. My motion was resoundingly defeated. Later on, I was told by an "old timer" that the motion failed because "everyone wants to come back next year," and I suppose that's true.

Ironically, another motion to limit attendance to 10,000 delegates passed. This past summer, about 9,000 delegates packed the convention center in San Francisco, sitting and moving about in Sardine City. Imagine what it will be like with 10,000 delegates in a few years.

In this case, bigger is not better.

Orlow Zumwalt
Gaithersburg, Maryland

No Hero to Me

I have a hard time following your logic in calling Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders a "hero" (Heroes and Zeros, April). Dr. Elders recommends "other preventative services" for school-based health clinics that include handing out condoms with or without parents' permission. In fact Dr. Elders feels so strongly about this that she had a "condom tree" in her office in Little Rock.

Is this a way to earn parents' trust? At best, condom distribution has proven a mixed blessing.

Dr. Elders has also stated that "pro-lifers have to stop their love affair with the fetus." Does this represent NEA policy as well? Perhaps our NEA leadership needs to relearn the birds and the bees and discover that students don't appear as a result of spontaneous generation.

In the minds of millions of parents, Dr. Elders is hardly a hero. In my book, she's a zero.

If NEA chooses to follow Dr. Elders and others like her, it will have an increasingly hard time shedding its image of a bloated educational bureaucracy more interested in a liberal social agenda than seeing students learn.

By the way, keep up the good work on your "Letters" page—it's the only balanced section of your publication.

Richard Slater
Camano Island, Washington

Adding It Up

I was extremely displeased to see the politically correct but factually bankrupt AIDS guesswork of Dr. John Oleske (Health, May).

According to Oleske, the Centers for Disease Control predicts 3 million Americans will be infected with HIV by the year 2000. He then has the gall to state he believes this is an underestimate, and this number may be closer to 10 million.

Such baseless predictions—not supported by any sources—belong in the *National Enquirer*, not in a professional journal. For more accurate information from a thoroughly documented educational journal, I recommend "HIV Disease: Current Concepts," found in the January/February 1993 issue of the *Journal of Counseling and Development.*

Many previous CDC and WHO predictions about the future number of AIDS cases have been too high. Please don't allow such baseless and unscientific statements to be printed in the magazine of the nation's largest teachers' union.

Edwin Hensley
Giessen, Germany

More Than a Mailbag

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The old-fashioned way:
Send your cards and letters to *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Should public schools distribute condoms?

YES

Jeanne Kiefner has been a school nurse for the past 20 years, the last five at New Jersey's Cherry Hill High School West. Kiefner also has a masters degree in education counseling and is New Jersey director for the National Association of School Nurses.

As a professional school nurse, an educator, a parent, and an advocate for public health concerns, I believe it's my job to advocate public school condom distribution.

I'll go even further. I think school nurses should, in fact, take the lead in building support for and operating an educational program that includes condom distribution.

As I see it, a school without a condom distribution program is an opportunity for the school nurse to take action—to work with the community and local health agencies to establish one. In fact, I'm now trying to do just that in my own community.

My school nurse colleagues share my sentiments. Recently, I attended the annual convention of the National Association of School Nurses, where delegates supported a resolution to defer the matter of condom distribution to the school nurse.

The delegates agreed that the school nurse should be the resource person who works together with the district to define the nature of the condom distribution process.

I work one-on-one with students, and in my practice, I find that kids, whether they're sexually active or not, want answers. Most often, these kids are concerned about sexually transmitted diseases.

It's been my experience that teens more readily ask questions in a one-on-one conversation than in a classroom. Teen sexuality is a given, but kids are sensitive talking about it, especially in a large group.

It's not unusual for me to get the questions kids have *after* the conclusion of a classroom discussion.

What teens want—and need—is information from a knowledgeable person. That's why when I discuss sexuality and family life issues with students at my school, I spend a lot of time talking about pregnancy risks and the spread of HIV, hepatitis, and other sexually transmitted diseases.

By treating these difficult and sensitive issues as the serious health risks that they are, I—and other school nurses—can offer condoms without condoning or encouraging sexual activity. It's a logical extension of conversations I have with students every day.

Incidentally, by the end of this school year, female condoms will be available for the first time, offering girls perhaps more sense of control in protecting themselves from infection.

I'm aware of the legal hurdles, ideological battlegrounds, political impact, and financial problems involved in a public school condom distribution program.

But we're professionals and, as such, we've got a professional responsibility to provide adolescents with the necessary information to help them make intelligent health choices.

Moreover, it's the role of the school nurse to respond to student needs and not be affected by any "moral messages" that might come from segments of the community.

We're living in the 1990s, not in the 1950s. As health care supervisors, it's our duty to make the public understand that condom distribution doesn't conflict with approved curricula and morality.

The reality is that teenagers are sexually active—and making condoms readily available to them is promoting good health.

NO

Janet Hughes is a veteran English teacher at W. A. Berry High School in Hoover, Alabama. Hughes is currently president of Hoover/AEA. She's also the wife of a retired Methodist minister, the mother of two children, and the grandmother of four.

How can I—one ordinary teacher— explain my "no" response to millions of readers? Perhaps the very fact that I'm an ordinary teacher qualifies me to do just that. I'm not exceptional in any way. I teach English in a large suburban high school.

I became a public school teacher partly because I wanted to give to students some of the wonderful learning experiences that my teachers had given to me. In this I'm sure that I'm not much different from the vast majority of you.

I teach in a state where many public schools are severely underfunded and are increasingly criticized for not doing a good job of educating children.

Indeed, a task force is considering court-ordered education reform here even as I write this.

I'm not ultraconservative. In fact, I consider myself fairly liberal. (I never in my wildest dreams thought I would agree with Rush Limbaugh on anything!)

I believe that government agencies have a responsibility to help those who can't help themselves. And yes, I do believe that teaching consists of more than giving homework and grading papers.

But what are public schools for?

In today's society, many public schools have been forced to assume responsibility for the physical and mental health of their students, for drug and sex education, for validation of self-esteem, for social interaction skills, for discipline and manners—for many, many responsibilities that society, parents, and sometimes students themselves are either unable or unwilling to assume.

Public school administrators and teachers have gradually taken over the roles of parents, grandparents, churches, social agencies, and health practitioners.

As teachers, we must cope with the bewildering variety of problems that students come to us with every day, accommodate their individual differences, and somehow find time to teach the material that national and state standards demand that they know.

Unfortunately, this increased responsibility hasn't brought increased support. I'm not complaining about my situation. I chose public school teaching as my career 30 years ago, and I go to work every day with pride in what I do.

But the students I teach need many things: answers to questions and more questions to answer, discipline and self-discipline, love and understanding, pride and self-esteem.

And, yes, the sexually active ones need condoms. I know this is true, even as my heart aches for their loss of innocence and as I wish their lives could be different.

But I must ask myself if it is the responsibility of public schools to supply students with the means to ensure safe sex? Or is it rather somehow to let them know, without being judgmental, that experimenting with sex isn't in their best interest at this time in their lives.

So my answer to the question is still "no." Public schools shouldn't distribute condoms. Please don't ask us to take on the added responsibility of ensuring that sexually active teens and preteens have condoms. Please don't lay upon our heads the responsibility for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Give us the resources and the support to do the job we know we can do. Let us teach! That's our responsibility.

Condom Distribution: The National Picture

The Center for Population Options (CPO) reports that more than 60 school districts—in states all over the country—have school-based clinics that make condoms available to sexually active students.

School-wide or district-wide condom distribution programs are operational in 10 additional districts, and programs to distribute condoms at school have been approved and are being designed in 15 more districts.

To date, the CPO reports, 37 school districts have rejected condom distribution programs.

What's NEA's position on distributing condoms at school? Delegates to the 1991 Representative Assembly adopted this statement as policy: "The Association urges that, if deemed appropriate by local choice, health care services [at school-based clinics] include family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods and instruction in their use."

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